

188624
T R A C T S

ON THE

L I B E R T Y,

SPIRITUAL and TEMPORAL,

OF

P R O T E S T A N T S in E N G L A N D.

ADDRESSED TO

J. N. Esq; at AIX-LA-CHAPELLE.

B Y

A N T H O N Y E L L Y S, D. D.

Late Lord Bishop of St. DAVID's.

P A R T I.

L O N D O N:

Printed by WILLIAM BOWYER; and sold by WHISTON and WHITE, in
Fleet-street; HOOPER, near the New Church in the *Strand*;
WOODFALL, at *Charing-Cross*; and
ROBSON, in *Bond Street*.

MDCCLXIII.

T R A C T S

TO THE
CONGREGATION

FOR THE
SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL

OF

PROTESTANTS IN ENGLAND

ADDRESSED TO

J. N. Eld; at Aix-la-Chapelle.

T. A. H. N. O. N. L. L. Y. S. D. D. E. I.
The Lord of the David's are



PART I

The subject of the bill put in the Religion
and spiritual Liberty: both which have been re-

ceived in the same manner by the same order
young of the same manner; have been further

to be the same manner; and told by the same
and told by the same manner; and told by the same

and told by the same manner; and told by the same

MCCCLXII

You

TO THE

KING.

SIR,

THE following Tracts, written by Dr. Elys, late Lord Bishop of St. David's, are humbly laid at your Majesty's feet.

The subject of this first Part is true Religion, and Spiritual Liberty ; both which have been recovered to this kingdom, by the animated endeavours of Your royal ancestors ; have been hitherto preserved in it by their wisdom and policy, and, we trust, will be transmitted to latest posterity, by Your Majesty's favour and protection.

You will see in them, Sir, the principles upon which the Kings of England have asserted the Supremacy over the Church in their dominions; the meaning of that word *Supremacy* declared by Law; their right, by that prerogative, to make establishments in it; the utility of them when made; and the equity and prudence of the legislature not to force the consciences of those, who think they cannot comply with the terms of them. And as this separation would necessarily produce opposition, Your Majesty's prerogative and ecclesiastical authority, in this case, is fully defended against the principal objections of the adversaries to it, and the several steps taken by the Sovereign, to make that establishment of the Church conducive to the welfare of the State, fairly vindicated.

To the exercise of this power, under God, it is that we owe our Spiritual Liberty: it is this we hope for ever to enjoy under the piety, the wisdom, the firmness of You, Sir, *the Defender of our Faith*: and we have reason to hope, from
the

DEDICATION.

v

the brightest dawn that ever rose upon this Church and Nation, that the light and warmth of Your Majesty's kind influences will ever shine upon, ever cherish, your loyal Church of England. In this hope and belief, Sir, these Papers are presented to your Majesty with all humbleness, by

Your Majesty's most dutiful,

And faithful subjects,

The EDITORS.

D E D I C A T I O N

that shall be done that ever shall be upon the Church
and Nation, that the light and warmth of your
Majesty's kind influences will ever shine upon
ever cherish your loyal Church of England. In
this hope and belief, Sir, these Papers are pre-
sented to your Majesty with all humbleness, by

Your Majesty's most humble

I the said Sir, have the honor to acknowledge
And faithful respects
concerned only to the very qualifications, that
will best be suited to the following Papers: the
great part of the said Papers, which are transcribed and
sent to the said Sir, I am sure will be of service that often at-
tends with the most extensive understanding, prevent

The Editors

who have their own and views of his acquaintance, who
were to this point of his great and rare abilities, and
knowledge of our Civil and Ecclesiastical constitution.

**THE
EDITORS
TO THE
READER.**

IT is not thought necessary to give any account of the life of the Author of these Tracts. As we are concerned only about his literary qualifications, these will best be discovered in the following Papers: the greatest part of which were left by him, transcribed and ready for the press: but that great diffidence that often attends men of the most extensive understanding, prevented him, from time to time, from coming to a resolution of publishing them, though often solicited by his friends, who had seen them, and others of his acquaintance, who were so fully satisfied of his great and rare abilities, and knowledge of our Civil and Ecclesiastical constitution,

as to believe no man of his time had better considered that subject, or was more capable of shewing it in a good light.

He was not only eminent for his fine parts, extensive knowledge, and sound judgment, jewels truly valuable in themselves, but they were set in him to the highest advantage, by a heart so overflowing with benevolence and candour, as never even to conceive terms of acrimony or reproach towards the opinions or persons of those who differed from him. This Christian temper of his is discoverable in all the Parts of these Tracts that are taken up in controversy; for he always thought a person, though on the right side of the question, with principles of persecution, to be a worse man than he that was on the wrong.

These dispositions engaged him in defence of Toleration, and all those indulgences that He thought ought to be allowed to tender consciences: but when that liberty was once granted (as it was by law to our Dissenters) he saw no necessity it should be attended with Civil power, which might endanger the Ecclesiastical establishment; and if he has shewed, beyond all doubt, the Right of Private Judgment in matters of Religion, and a Liberty of publicly worshiping God, in consequence
I of

of that judgment; he has also as undeniably proved the necessity of a Test, as a just security to the Established Church, and a proper guard to the welfare of the State; for he was persuaded, that human laws cannot bind conscience, but they may exclude those from civil power, who profess a private conscience repugnant to the public conscience of the State: all which he has managed with such gentle, charitable, and Christian liberty, as meant only to answer the arguments, not inflame the resentments of the opponents.

In treating of Spiritual Liberty, it was almost unavoidable to enter, with any propriety, into the subject, without laying open the weakness of the Romish arguments in defence of their doctrine and discipline, particularly Transubstantiation, and the Infallibility of their church; which, though they have been sufficiently confuted already by other able men, yet our right reverend Prelate has given a new turn to old arguments, and answered those of archbishop Fenelon, and the celebrated Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, with regard to the ignorance of some men, and invincible error of others; in which case he was persuaded, upon the principles of the Gospel, and the dictates of right reason, that such persons, in proportion to their faith and obedience in sincerity,

b

will

x P R E F A C E.

will meet with acceptance from the mercy of an equitable and just judge, without requiring the directions of an infallible guide.

In the Tract concerning Ecclesiastical Supremacy vested in the Crown, it will appear, that the clamour raised against it as sacrilegious and unjustifiable by the Romanists, and maintained by Protestant Dissenters even to this day, proceeds only from an inattention to the laws by which it is restored and united to the crown, as an ancient right and jurisdiction belonging to it.

Here the Reader will see, at one view, all the laws relative to this subject, from the 26 Hen. VIII. to the 13 Eliz. which confirmed the Thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, the 37th of which speaks of the ecclesiastical power of the civil magistrate; by all which it was either expressly or virtually declared, that they did not give the Sovereign any power to preach, and administer sacraments, ordain, &c. but only to visit, repress, and restrain, with the civil sword, all errors, heresies, &c. Upon which the Oath of Supremacy, so much objected to in the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, is defended, as meaning only to acknowledge a supremacy of power in our sovereigns, *in opposition to any foreign Prince, Prelate, State, or Potentate, and that power, only directive, coercive, and merely political, without any the least*

least claim to any exercise of it, that was spiritual—
a distinction so plain and so obvious, that one would incline
to think the learned adversaries to it were not willing, ra-
ther than not able, to understand it.

If the Right Reverend Author had lived, the Publick
would have received these Papers with more satisfaction
from himself—But as things have happened, those of his
acquaintance, who knew of these Tracts, desired they
might not die with him; and requested his executrix, that
she would not deprive the world (too much interested in
the loss of him on other accounts) of the fruit of those
labours, that had engaged the greatest part of his life.
They were accordingly given into our hands to put to the
Press; and all the little merit we claim, is, that we have
executed that trust with fidelity.

The Second Part of these Tracts, that relate to Civil
Liberty, will be published with all proper expedition.

least claim to any exercise of it, that was found in—
 a distinction so plain and so obvious, that one would have
 to think the learned advocates to it were not willing to
 offer than possible, to understand it.

If the Right Reverend Author had lived, the Public
 would have received these Tracts with more satisfaction
 from himself. But as things have happened, those of his
 acquaintance, who knew of these Tracts, desired they
 might not die with him; and proposed his executing them
 the world not deservive the world too much interested in
 the loss of him on other accounts) of the fruit of those
 labours, that had engaged the greatest part of his life.
 They were accordingly given into our hands to put to the
 Press; and all the little merit we claim, is, that we have
 executed that trust with fidelity.

The Second Part of these Tracts, that relate to Civil
 Liberty, will be published with all proper expedition.

A N

INTRODUCTION, &c.

To J. N. Esquire, at AIX LA CHAPELLE.

IN reading the history of ages past, one cannot but observe how frail the firmest establishments are that human wisdom and power can make. The great empires of those times have all, in their turns, either sunk by degrees, or by very sudden and violent shocks have been broken to pieces. Republics, that once enjoyed ample liberty, and seemed to have power enough to preserve it, have, since, been reduced under abject servitude. Countries, that formerly shined with the light of the gospel of Christ, are now quite involved in the darkness of ignorance or superstition. And cities, that by their extended commerce were raised to great heights of wealth and power, and filled with most beautiful and magnificent works of art, have been so destroyed, that their poor remains are now hardly to be found.

Upon this view of things, I will not presume to make any judgment for how long a time the public constitution and liberty in England are likely to remain in their present

A

condition.

condition. This will depend on our national conduct, and on the measures which the Providence of God shall see fit to take in the government of this part of the world; which measures are often founded on reasons much too high and of too great extent for our narrow views. But what changes soever may hereafter be made in our public constitution, in either of its parts, ecclesiastical or civil, one may safely affirm, that both of them are now founded in reason, and fitted to promote our attainment of happiness both in a future life and in the present: so that they deserve our utmost endeavours, at any hazard of our fortunes or our lives, to preserve them to ourselves, and transmit them as they are to our latest descendents.

For making out these points, against what I find the Abbot of L** has been suggesting to you about them, these papers are designed. This gentleman has shewn not only great art in the management of the argument he has offered you, but more knowledge of both the parts of our constitution. Accordingly he has made some objections, especially with regard to our church and the dissenters from it, which none of the Romanists, that I have met with, have used before.---However I hope, that, if these papers shall have the favour of your attention, they will be found to contain answers sufficient to all that he has objected.

The tracts in the first part, being upon liberty in spiritual affairs, begin with some questions relating to it, which, on account of their great importance to the welfare of mankind, and of several difficulties formed by the
Romanists

Romanists and others about them, were proper to be treated at large and with care. The questions are,

First, Whether every man hath a right to judge, and on the whole to determine, for himself about all matters of religion.

Secondly, How far men ought to be permitted to worship God in public, according to their own Judgment even though it is erroneous. And,

Lastly, Whether in every country the sovereign * has a right, or is obliged to make and maintain a public establishment of some religion.

By thinking on these questions as treated here in a general way, you will be prepared to make a right judgment about other disputes between Protestants and the church of Rome, which are not mentioned in these previous questions. The increase of the Romish interest in Europe has been so great for these last hundred years, and is so likely to go farther, that it certainly is very necessary that the people of this nation should be acquainted at least with the chief arguments against that religion. Of these therefore you will here find some account; not a large one indeed, because none but things of the greatest moment have been selected, yet such a one as will, I hope, clearly shew that our ancestors were indispensably obliged to leave the communion of the church of Rome, and that we are as strictly

* The word *sovereign* in these papers will signify the person or persons, in each country, invested with the supreme authority both legislative and executive.

bound to continue that separation as long as the terms of her communion remain what they are.

The mischiefs this nation formerly suffered in its temporal interest by the authority and jurisdiction exercised here by the bishop of Rome, in spiritual affairs, or in order to them, are briefly represented, and reasons given for which that authority was very justly, as well as much for the national advantage, suppressed and abolished by our legislature.

The manner of settling the constitution of the church of England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth is afterwards observed, and considerations are offered to shew that whatever the case might then have been in some respects, yet the authority at present assumed, and the liberty allowed in things ecclesiastical by the legislature and government in England, may, if duly used, be very consistent with all the purposes of religion, while they are productive of the peace and welfare of the civil state.

The tracts in the latter part of these papers chiefly regard our civil liberty; and give some account of the advantages we enjoy both as to the course of judicial proceedings in matters criminal and civil; and as to the rights of both houses of parliament. Of divers particulars that will be mentioned under these heads, you have, I suppose, a general notion; but you may not perhaps be sufficiently apprized at what times and by what steps these advantages have been obtained: And therefore on these points some observations are here made, which, though not intended to
 2 give

give an exact historical account of all transactions of that kind, will, possibly, afford you a tolerable view of the gradual improvements that have been made in our civil constitution. This is like an old oak * which has often been wounded, and on some occasions has felt the axe even at its roots; but yet has survived all those dangerous blows, and continues to yield both due protection and pleasing shade to all who are under it. To speak without a figure --- the legal and free government transmitted to us through many ages, is not much impaired, or not beyond remedy in any of its parts, and in some respects has been even improved; a happiness enjoyed now by few, if by any other nations in Europe. For the constitutions of France and Spain and the two northern kingdoms of Sweden and Denmark, which were originally not much different from our own, have all been, since, changed much for the worse, and though one of the latter has a little while ago recovered its freedom, yet whether it will keep it for any long time seems not very clear.

On the causes to which the loss of liberty in those countries has been owing, and on the different dispositions of men and things, which, under the providence of God, have contributed to preserve the liberty of England, you will find some remarks; by considering which with the state of

* *Duris ut ilex tonsa bipennibus
Nigræ feraci frondis in Algido,
Per damna, per cædes, ab ipso
Ducit opes animumque ferro.*

HORAT. CARM. lib. iv. ode iv.

things

things now among us, from the sketch given of it in the last of these tracts, you will, perhaps, judge what ballance there is at present in the national constitution; what turn it may probably take hereafter; how far the interests of the crown and the nobility may be affected with that turn; whether any part of the present establishment be going to decay; and what methods may probably be most effectual to support, repair, and preserve the whole. No English gentleman can justly be blamed for employing his thoughts on points that so nearly concern the welfare of his country. But all men of sense will easily see that they ought not to be too hasty in drawing or fixing on any conclusions about matters of such moment, and yet less in forming and acting upon schemes of much alteration in consequence of them. Our public constitution is too great an object to be surveyed, and well understood, in a little time. One may justly say of it, as Polybius did of that of Rome, that a more than ordinary attention is requisite to take an exact view of its distinguishing parts. And one may truly add that it is yet more difficult to judge what effects will follow from making any alterations in a body consisting of parts so various, so antient, and so much dependent on each other.

On the whole, I hope that these tracts, though perhaps of less use to you than I could wish, yet will lead you to think closely on these subjects of importance, and so will contribute to your having such notions of liberty and of government, both spiritual and temporal, that, keeping your

self

self clear on the one hand from bigotry and superstition, and from an indifference to all things concerning religion on the other, you will firmly adhere to the gospel of Christ; at the same time bearing, in the true spirit of it, with those errors that arise from weakness or prejudice in any of our fellow-subjects; endeavouring with gentle applications to remove them, and aiming to support that constitution of the national church, by which the great ends of the Christian religion, and the welfare of the public may best be attained.

With regard to the civil government, there is, from your natural probity of mind, and your large estate, great reason to hope that you will not be inclined either to servility or to licentiousness, will never act upon low corrupt views, nor from a spirit either of resentment, or of partiality, much less of faction; but will always retain a hearty loyalty to the King, with a just concern for the prerogative of the crown, while you are careful to maintain the rights and privileges of the subjects. I will only add farther, that if you do really, as some Athenians, * it seems, did of old, judge freedom to be happiness, you ought not to be wanting in courage to preserve it.

These are the dispositions most to be desired in an English gentleman; whom they will render capable of being a good servant to the crown, and not make him less a true friend to his country. That in being such a one you may

* ΤΟ ΕΥΔΑΙΜΟΝ ΤΟ ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΝ, ΤΟΔΕ ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΟΝ ΤΟ ΕΥΤΥΧΟΝ ΚΡΙΝΟΝΤΕΣ.

2 x INTRODUCTION, &c.

reflect with satisfaction upon your own conduct, may gain the esteem of the most valuable men, and may be in all other circumstances happy; are wishes that come with great warmth from the heart of,

S I R,

Your most faithful

And obedient Servant,

ANTHONY ELLYS.

T R A C T S
ON THE
LIBERTY,
SPIRITUAL and TEMPORAL,
OF
PROTESTANTS in ENGLAND.

PART I.
Of SPIRITUAL LIBERTY.

TRACT I.
Of the Right of Private Judgment in all Matters of Religion.

THE liberty enjoyed by English subjects in spiritual affairs is chiefly opposed to that servitude of mind, which all Christians are under, who live in communion with the church of Rome. Of the nature and evil effects of which servitude, meaning to give you a short account, I shall, first, observe how much, against reason and the holy Scriptures, the members of that church are restrained from using their private judgment about any points of religious faith.

HER doctrine concerning this matter is, that, in order to the safe direction of all men to that true faith, which is requisite to their eternal salvation, our Lord JESUS CHRIST preserves by his grace the Catholic Church from erring in any point of that necessary faith, and also confers upon her an absolute authority to de-

B

termine

2 OF SPIRITUAL LIBERTY. Part I.

termine all questions that arise concerning it: so that her decisions upon any such question (however contrary they may appear to the judgment of any private person, or particular church) ought all to be received with the fullest assent and submission in practice.

WE need not to prove that this doctrine is held by the church of Rome, or that her practice is suited to it: for both these facts are sufficiently known to the Christian world, of which a great part, allowing the doctrine to be true, professes to yield a submission to her dictates in all points of such faith, as being supposed to agree with those of the Catholic church, as well in it's first ages, as in the present. But that this supposition is quite without ground, you will find by a number of instances given hereafter in the course of these tracts. The point now to be proved is, that, in the present state of the church of Rome, and of all other churches in communion with her, of which, and which only, the Catholic church, in her judgment, consists, it is not possible, that either she, or any of them, can be invested by God with that absolute authority, to which she pretends, in all questions concerning religious faith. When this has been proved, some considerations of a different kind will be offered to shew, that, if any other church, independent on Rome, does now, or should hereafter, make a claim to this authority, there never can be any real ground from Reason, or the Holy Scripture, sufficient to support it: so that, on the whole, the right of private judgment in every person will be firmly established.

IN the First place, against the church of Rome, and all other churches in communion with her, our argument may be shortly comprised in the following propositions: No church, which enjoins a thing to be believed that is really false, and, in consequence of it, a thing to be done, that is morally evil, can have authority from God to require of any persons an absolute submission to her judgment concerning all points of religious faith: But the church of Rome, and all other churches in communion with her, enjoin a thing to be believed, that is really false, and, in consequence of it, a thing to be done, that is morally evil. Therefore, neither the
church

church of Rome, nor any other church in communion with her, can have authority from God to require of any persons an absolute submission to her judgment concerning all points of religious faith.

THE truth of the first of these propositions will appear by considering, that if a church, which acts as this proposition describes, be supposed to have from God such an absolute authority over the judgments of any persons, two things must follow.

ONE is, that all the persons, who acknowledge and submit to the authority of this church, must certainly be led both into the profession of erroneous faith, and into the ill practice which she enjoins. They cannot, with reason, make a stand against either. For when they are persuaded that God, who is perfectly wise and good, requires this their absolute submission to that church; their plain duty is, not to have any scruple at all about yielding it, drawn from a regard to the nature, or consequences of her injunctions, but, firmly to believe, and constantly act as she enjoins. For her voice in this case is the voice of God, to which, whenever it is known to be such, an absolute, and even implicit, obedience is due from all rational creatures.

THE other consequence is, that, (how gross soever the error may be, and however irrational and evil the practice, into which the persons concerned must be led,) yet both of them would, on the present supposition, be really caused by God himself. For he would not only hinder these persons from using their private judgment, by which their fall into this error and ill practice might have been prevented, but as having, in general, required them to submit to the injunctions of that church, he would even oblige them to go into both. Since, therefore, their believing and acting in these cases, naturally would, and ought to be, the consequences of the authority now supposed to be granted by God, He would be, no doubt, the real cause of them. But this conduct on his part is not to be supposed: because the persons, obliged by his injunctions, would, in consequence of them, be under a necessity of acting in a way repugnant to the nature and reason of things, and to the relations, which, as his creatures, and rational agents, they bear

4 OF SPIRITUAL LIBERTY. Part I.

to God; and their acting so, would be morally evil. It would, therefore, be inconsistent with the holiness and goodness essential to God [a], were he to command, and be the cause of, their acting thus. By consequence, the supposition of his doing it is absurd, and ought not to be made. It is impossible that he should grant to any church, which acts in the way mentioned in the first proposition, an authority to require from any persons an absolute submission to her judgment, exclusive of their own, concerning all points of religious faith. Thus the first proposition in our argument appears to be true.

THE second proposition was, That both the church of Rome, and all other churches in communion with her, do expressly maintain, and strictly require all persons, who live in communion with them, to profess, as a necessary article of their faith, a thing not only false, but tending, naturally, to produce, and actually joined with, sinful practice: which charge will be made good, by considering, in the first place, the doctrine of that church relating to the wonderful transubstantiation, which she supposes to be wrought in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, together with her practice of adoring the consecrated substance in that sacrament with the highest kind of religious worship. She publicly teaches, and requires all her members, under the pain of an anathema, to believe and profess, that, by virtue of the words of consecration pronounced by a priest upon the elements of bread and wine, they are, as to their substances, instantly changed; the bread into the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the wine into his blood; both which are the same that he had at the institution of this sacrament, and at his crucifixion.

Her arguments for this amazing doctrine, are taken from the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, when, after the celebration of the Paschal Supper, he (in breaking the bread, and giving it to his disciples) said, *Take, eat, this is my body* [b]. And, in giving to

[a] Plato Polit. lib. ii. *Κακὸν δὲ αἴτιον φάναι θεὸν τινι γίνεσθαι, ἀγαθὸν ὅτινα, διαμαρτυροῦν μὲν τὸν θεόν.*

[b] Matthew xxvi. 26--28.

them

them afterwards the cup of wine, he said, *This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* These words the Romanists understand in the literal sense, as being what is always to be followed in the Scriptures, whenever there are not necessary reasons for departing from it. We Protestants acknowledge this rule to be a good one, and are as little disposed, as the church of Rome, to have recourse, without reason, to figurative senses. But we cannot forbear admitting, that, sometimes, there is a necessity for it, and that it may be done agreeably to the design of the Scripture. Our Saviour, for instance, speaks of himself as being a *Way*, a *Door*, and a *Vine* [c]. And St. John, in the Revelation, affirms, that *the seven Candlesticks are the seven Churches* [d]. There is a visible necessity, that these expressions should be understood as figuratively meant. The question then is, whether in the texts, that have been here mentioned, relating to the Lord's Supper, there be not a necessity fully as great, for quitting the literal sense of the words, and taking them as if Christ had said, "This bread represents my body, as being in a broken or suffering state for your sakes: and whenever, under this figure, it shall be eaten by you, with a due remembrance of my sufferings and death, and with other fit dispositions of heart, it will be the occasion of those effects to your advantage, which my bodily sufferings were intended to produce." If this figurative sense of the texts, *This is my body*, &c. be plainly agreeable to our Saviour's design, and the literal sense would be attended with gross absurdities, the former of these senses must be the true one.

Now, that our Lord intended to use this figurative way of speaking, we shall find to be probable, from the view and reference he appears to have had to the Jewish Passover. That was a plain and remarkable type of our spiritual deliverance to be procured by his sufferings and death, in regard to which he is termed *our Passover* [e]. The Jews, in that solemnity, commonly used some figurative phrases. Of the Lamb then prepared, they were wont

[c] John xiv. 6. x. 7. xv. 1.

[d] Rev. i. 20.

[e] 1 Cor. v. 7.

to say, *This is the body of the Paschal lamb.* About the bread, their expression was, *This is the bread of affliction, which our fathers ate in Ægypt.* They never could think, that the lamb and the bread, then before them on the table, were the same individual things, which their ancestors had eaten in Ægypt, many hundred years before. They must have understood, that those things only represented, and kept up the memory of, the first paschal lamb, and of the unleavened bread eaten with it. Agreeably to these their usual ways of speaking, (which were known to be figurative) it was natural, that our Saviour should make use of the like in his new institution. So, instead of one of their common phrases, *This is the body of the paschal lamb,* he said, *This is my body which is given for you.* And in blessing the wine, (which they sometimes called *The blood of the grapes,* and which, under that figure, might, naturally, represent the blood of victims, usually shed in solemn covenants and sacrifices of atonement,) he said, *This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of Sins.*

THERE was not the least danger, the Apostles should misunderstand him in these ways of speaking: for (besides the circumstances here before mentioned) there were others in their view, which must effectually have prevented any reasonable man from thinking, that these expressions were literally meant. Those circumstances were, that our Lord could not give his whole body with his hand; that he could not give his body, as already broken, before it was broken; nor his blood, as shed, and separated from his body, before it was actually in a state of separation. Such absurdities, that would have attended the literal sense, must have hindered these expressions from being misunderstood, and have shewn a necessity that they should be taken in a figurative sense. And, in fact, the Apostles appear to have taken them in this latter sense: for otherwise, no doubt, some difficulties would have been made by them, as well in regard to the possibility of the things, that our Saviour spoke, as to the nature of the command he gave: which latter (even though it had been only to eat human flesh and blood,

blood, under the appearances of bread and wine) would have been both contrary to their Law, and very shocking in itself. But since there is no mention in the New Testament of any such difficulties made by the Apostles, which yet, in a matter of so great moment, would certainly have been mentioned, had any such been made; we from thence may conclude, that the Apostles understood our Saviour's words in a figurative sense. And if they understood them so, our Lord must have meant them so; because if he had not, he would, certainly, have explained himself more clearly about a point of such importance, which he saw that his Apostles misunderstood. These observations might, of themselves, be sufficient to prove, that the words of our Saviour, *This is my body, &c.* may not only well bear, but were, certainly, designed to have, a figurative sense. However; in order to your fuller satisfaction as to this point, the following argument begs your attention.

AMONG other consequences of the Romish doctrine about Transubstantiation, these two are very plain:

FIRST, that then atural and crucified body of Jesus Christ must be contained in every the least particle of the consecrated bread. And,

SECONDLY, that this body may be, at the same time, in two or more places, very distant from each other.

THE former of these consequences needs not to be proved, for the church of Rome expressly avows it in these following words of the Council of Trent [g]: *The whole and entire Christ exists under the species of bread, and under every part thereof; as also under the species of wine, and under every part thereof.* In order to make the latter consequence also, abovementioned, very clear, we need only to suppose, that two Hosts are consecrated on the same day, the one at Paris, and the other at Rome; and that each of them is kept in the same church, as the practice often is, for se-

[g] Totus enim, et integer Christus sub panis specie, et sub quavis ipsius speciei parte: totus item sub vini specie, et sub ejus partibus existit. *Conc. Trid. Sess. xiii. Cap. 3.*

veral days after. On this supposition, and the Romish scheme, it will be clear beyond all dispute, that the body of Christ must be, in the very same point of time at Paris, and at Rome. Now to admit a doctrine as true, which has these necessary consequences, must, by another consequence, equally unavoidable, confound all distinction between Truth and Falshood; it must ruin the proofs of all religion, both natural and revealed; and so must, at last, destroy itself, which you know to be the case of the absurd suppositions, made sometimes in Mathematics, to demonstrate the truth.

In order to see that this must be the consequence, it is necessary to consider on what grounds we distinguish truth from falshood; or rather, in what way our minds are affected, when we actually discern the one of them from the other. Now (without much enlargement on these points, of which every one can best judge from his own experience and reflexion) it will be sufficient, if we observe, that the mind of man is so formed, that, whenever it views it's own Ideas, it finds that some of them do, by a necessity in the nature of things, appear to agree together; and others do as much appear to disagree. Between some of them there is a visible correspondence and connexion; between others as plain an inconsistency and repugnance. For instance: The idea of Benefits received, and the idea of Gratitude on the part of the receiver, agree together; the idea of Property, and that of Theft, are repugnant to each other; the idea of Religion agrees with the idea of Man, not with the idea of Beast. Now the mind when it has given a competent attention to any ideas, and has seen them as they are, does, naturally, embrace, and is pleasingly satisfied with, some propositions formed about them while it does as unavoidably recoil from, and feel a reluctance against, others. Those propositions, which (as rightly expressive of the relations between Beings, or Ideas) we approve and embrace, we call Truths: those, which, for a contrary reason, we dislike and reject, we call Falsties; and the natural disposition of the mind, thus to embrace, or reject propositions (of which we discern clearly the meaning and evidence)

is the only standard [b] or mean that we have, whereby to judge of Truth and of Falsehood, as far as either of them can be discovered by the natural power of our understandings.

LET these remarks be applied to the Romish doctrine about Transubstantiation, in consequence of which, both these propositions must be held as true.

FIRST, That the crucified body of Christ is contained intire in every the least particle of consecrated bread :

SECONDLY, That this same body of Christ may be, in the very same point of time, at Paris, and at Rome. What can be more contrary to that perception of our minds, which to us is the natural standard of Truth, than both these propositions are? One may easily prove, that they imply contradictions. For instance; the council of Trent affirms, that, in the Lord's supper, the whole human body of Jesus Christ is under the species of bread, and under every part thereof. If then, from a consecrated wafer X, supposed to be the whole body of Christ, we break off a piece V, and remove it to the distance of twenty yards; this V is now the whole body of Christ; which being but one, and the remainder of X, being also that same whole body of Christ, the plain consequence is, that V and the remainder of X must be but one and the same thing; even while, by supposition, and in plain fact, they are two things, intirely distinct, and twenty yards separate the one from the other. More instances of this kind might easily be given.

BUT there is no need of any further illustration, in order to shew the utter repugnance of this doctrine to the natural perception we have of things. The mind, at first view, discovers this repugnance as clearly, as it can do in any case whatever; as clearly, as it sees the most evident Truth, or most evident Falsity, that can be proposed to it; more clearly, indeed, than it sees the Truth of several propositions of the utmost importance, relating to Morality, and

[b] Nobis notitiae rerum imprimuntur, sine quibus neque intelligi quicquam, neque quæri, aut disputari potest. *Cicer. Academic. Quest. lib. iv.*

even to the Being of God himself. For tho' we can prove this last great Truth, with a certainty far beyond any just doubt, by considering the frame of the material world, together with the powers of our own minds; yet still, the connexion, which the Ideas of such a world, and of such powers in our minds, have with the idea of a Spiritual Being absolutely perfect in all respects, must be owned to be less clear, than the connexion there is between the parts of this proposition, "That the whole body of Christ cannot be contained within a piece of bread of but an inch in compass." Or, of that other proposition, "That this Body of Christ cannot be at the same Time in two different places at the distance of some hundred miles from each other." The ideas of Eternity, of necessary Existence, and others, that belong to the Divine essence, and must enter into our reasonings about it, are, in some respects, obscure, and even beyond the comprehension of our minds; so that tho', from considering the several propositions, of which these ideas are constituent parts, an evidence arises, in other respects sufficient to convince us beyond all doubt of the truth of those propositions; yet still this evidence is less clear upon the whole, than that evidence we have for the two propositions here above-mentioned relating to the doctrine of Transubstantiation. In those there is no obscurity or difficulty at all. They consist of ideas, that are all very clear, and fully within the comprehension of the mind, which sees the nature and relations of them by mere intuition, or, at the first immediate view. Accordingly, the reluctance which any attentive and unprejudiced mind has against admitting those propositions to be true, is as great as it can be in any case whatsoever.

If therefore we cannot be absolutely certain, that those propositions are false; then how can we be certain that any others are true, which concern the Being and Attributes of God, when our evidence for their truth, derived from our perceptions about them, is not so clear as it is for the falsity of those that concern Transubstantiation? The same faculty of the mind is employed in both those cases, and is as well fitted to discover Falsehood as Truth. If therefore we cannot depend upon it, for discovering Falsehood in a case

case so extremely plain, as the Romish doctrine about Transubstantiation, then neither can we depend upon it, for the discovery of Truth, in any other case. So that the natural perception of the Mind, which, in ordinary cases, is the only mean that we have to judge rightly about them, would be render'd quite ineffectual. To us, the distinction between Truth and Falshood would be utterly confounded and destroyed; and we should be reduced to a total uncertainty about every thing, even about the Being and Perfections of God. As some Chemical liquors will clear a paper of all the characters written upon it; so this doctrine of Transubstantiation, universally applied, would utterly efface those original notices which are written upon our hearts. It would make us fit only for such a state, as the Bonzees of China represent one of their Saints to have been in, who (they say) spent nine years with his face to a wall, thinking upon nothing, and so became perfect.

BUT can God be the author of a doctrine, which has these consequences, utterly subversive of all morality, of all truth [1], and even of the knowledge that we have of his existence? Most certainly not: For this would be repugnant to the end of his creating us: It would make a chaos in the moral world, quite inconsistent with his perfections, and with the being of any religion. Since, therefore, these suppositions cannot be admitted, it plainly follows, that, as certain as we are of the Attributes and even of the Being of God, so certain we are, that the doctrine of Transubstantiation is false. Now, if the Church of Rome erred only in this doctrine, it would not be conceivable, that God should require men implicitly, or absolutely to follow her directions in any point of Faith: For he, who is the source of all intellectual light, and truth, as well as of the most perfect goodness, would never oblige any of his rational Creatures to be led into so gross an error, even though it had rested only in the understanding: Because, as I have

[1] *Tunc eam Philosophiam sequere, quæ confundat vera cum falsis, spoliat nos iudicio, privat approbatione, omnibus orbat sensibus? Tull. Quæst. Academ. lib. iv.*

said, it must, by consequence, have darkened and even extinguished the light of knowledge of every sort in all mankind.

BUT this error is attended with another extremely bad consequence in practice. For on the supposition, that the body of Christ, accompanied with his Divine essence, is in the Sacrament of the Eucharist; the church of Rome orders the officiating Priest (as soon as he has said the words of consecration over the bread) to lift it up to the view of the people present, ALL whom she commands, to kneel and adore it. This adoration the writers of chief note in the church of Rome, avow to be directed, not only to the Divinity of Christ, as being there present, but also to the material object, apparently nothing but mere bread, then exposed to be seen, and afterwards eaten. Their eminent advocate, Cardinal Bellarmine, freely declares, that as "Christ
" is [k] properly to be adored; so that adoration belongs also
" to the symbols of bread and wine, as far as they are apprehended to be one with Christ himself, whom they contain." And in this he plainly follows the Doctrine of the Council of Trent, which says [l], "there is no room left to doubt, but
" that all the faithful servants of Christ ought to pay that Latria,
" or highest kind of religious worship, which is due to the true
" God, to this most holy sacrament: for it is not the less to be adored,
" because it was by Christ our Lord appointed to be eaten." From which words it is evident, that the same disposition or act of the mind, with which they adore Almighty God, is directed to the material substance, which is then exposed to view by the Priest. The same thing, which is to be afterwards eaten, under the form of bread, is previously worshipped. And the adoration, here paid to the consecrated substance, is said to be grounded on the suppo-

[k] *Proprie Christum esse adorandum, et eam adorationem etiam ad symbola panis et vini pertinere, quatenus apprehenduntur ut quid unum cum ipso Christo quem continent. Bellarm. de Eucharistia, lib. iv. cap. 29.*

[l] *Conc. Trident. Sess. xiii. Cap. 5. Nullus itaque dubitandi locus relinquitur, quin omnes Christi fideles, pro more in Catholicâ Ecclesiâ semper recepto, Latriæ cultum, qui vero Deo debetur, huic sanctissimo Sacramento in veneratione exhibeant; neque enim ideo minus est adorandum, quod fuerit a Christo Domino, ut sumatur, institutum.*

Traet I. Of Private Judgment in Matters of Religion. 13

sition of its having been changed into the body of Christ from bread, that it was before.

SINCE then we have proved, that there has not been any such change of substance, and that, by consequence, the body of Christ is not really present in the Eucharist, but the bread remains the same that it was in its own nature; the worship thus paid to it, must be grievously absurd, affrontive in proportion to the Majesty of God, and highly detrimental to the Christian Religion, by offending many persons, and hindering their conversion or adherence to it. If the gross absurdity of this worship did not sufficiently appear of itself, we might quote the judgment of one of the most celebrated authors of antiquity in a similar case. Tully having observed that corn was called by the name of Ceres, and wine by that of Liber, who were then accounted Deities, adds, that, indeed, these were figurative expressions commonly used; "but do you conceive it possible, says he, for any one to be so utterly void of understanding, as to think that what he eats is really a God [m]?" Averroes, an eminent Arabian physician, thought he had great reason for triumphing over the Gospel of Christ, on account of the doctrine we are now considering [n]: "I have travelled over the world, says he, and have found divers sects; but so sottish a sect or law I never found, as is the sect of the Christians, because with their own teeth they devour the God whom they worship [o]." And we are told by a later Author of good credit, that a French priest at Constantinople went to the Vazier in full Divan, and begun with declaring his intention to embrace the Mahometan Religion: At the same time he drew out of his pocket a box full of consecrated hosts, which he himself had Deified as a Priest, and whereon the worms had preyed, crying

[m] *Ecquem tam amentem esse putes, ut illud, quo vescatur, Deum credat esse? Cicer. de Nat Deor. lib. iii. cap. 16.*

[n] *Dionys. Carthus. in 4 Dist. 10. Art. 1. quoted in Abp. Tillotson's Discourse against Transubstantiation, pag. 34, quarto. (312 fol.)*

[o] *Rather than with such Men, be my Soul with the Philosophers. Conf. between Mr. Chillingworth and Lewgar. Edit. Lond. 1719. p. 7.*

out, see here the Gods of the Romish creation, which cannot preserve themselves from corruption [p]. From these instances, as well as from the nature of the things, we cannot but see, in a very strong light, how extremely absurd the doctrine of Transubstantiation is, and how highly to be blamed that worship must be of the kind which is due to none but God, when paid on no better grounds than these, to such an object as a piece of mere bread. A belief of this nature, attended with such a practice, must certainly have been owing to a grievous corruption, or disuse at least, of the faculty of reason. Now from so bad a cause, as either of these is, to form conceptions glaringly absurd, about the nature of God, and the duty we owe to him, and to carry those conceptions into such a practice, is, certainly, sinful in a high degree. We find how severely God charges the Jews on a like account when they fell into Idolatry. *None, saith [q] Isaiah, considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of a tree in the fire, yea I have baked bread upon the coals thereof, and shall I make the residue an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a Tree?---A deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lye in my right hand?* The same Prophet in another place speaks of the Jews, *as being a people of no understanding [r]*. He means, that they did not exercise, or rather, had very much impaired and corrupted the faculties of their minds: And, therefore, as the text goes on, *He that made them would not have mercy upon them, and he that formed them would shew them no favour.* May not these passages be justly applied, in some measure, at least, to the faith and practice of the church of Rome, in adoring the sacramental bread? Must there not be a very great and blameable want of consideration, in this latter case, as well as in the former? Supposing the proofs we have given to be good, this charge never can be, with reason, denied.

BUT some advocates for that church (appearing to be doubtful of the goodness of their cause in this capital point) have endeavoured

[p] De la Motraye's Travels, Lond. Edit. 1723. Vol. I. p. 222.

[q] Isai. xlv. 19, 20. [r] Isai. xxvii. 11.

Tract I. *Of private Judgment in Matters of Religion.* 15

to provide an excuse for themselves, by alledging, that their intention is to worship Christ from a belief of his bodily presence there: Which, if it were true, would require such a worship. And therefore, tho' he should not be, in fact, so present, yet they will be acquitted before God, on account of the goodness of their intention. But the Romanists must know, that there are many cases, wherein men (who do things that are in themselves evil) will not be justified by their having been mistaken, and thought them to be good. Error (tho' it may, indeed, be sometimes excusable, even when persisted in) certainly is not so in every case. In order to make it have any title to be excused, it must be such as, humanly speaking, could not be avoided; and, therefore, is not to be justly charged on the erring person, as those things are not, that are out of their power. In any such case, indeed, men acting to the best of their knowledge, when they were not able to inform themselves better, will be excused before God, both for their actions and their conceptions. But the case will not be the same, when their error proceeds from a non-use, or a corruption, of their understandings, occasioned by their passions, or prejudices owing to them, which they might easily have overcome, but neglected to do it, in regard to worldly views and interests, or from a want of such consideration as might, and ought to have been employed. In every such case, their absurd conceptions, as well as the actions consequent upon them, will be justly blameable, and charged by God to their account. How far this will be the doom of particular persons in the church of Rome, it is not our province to determine: *To their own master they must stand or fall*, Rom. xiv, 4. But, in general, this is certain, that since the doctrine of Transubstantiation is absurd and false, the practice of adoring the sacramental bread, as the Papists do, must be highly irrational, and dishonourable to God, and very dangerous to the salvation of any Christian, by whom it is practised.

AND now, upon the whole, I beg leave to return to the argument proposed at the beginning of this tract, against the claim made by the church of Rome, of an absolute authority over all Christians in every point of religious faith. The first proposition in that argument

ment was, That no church (which enjoins a thing to be believed that is really false; and, in consequence of it, a thing to be done which is morally evil,) can have authority from God to require of any person an absolute submission to her decisions concerning all points of religious faith. The truth of which proposition hath been evinced by shewing, that the supposition of God's conferring this authority upon any church, which acts as this proposition describes, must be manifestly contrary to his perfections: And, therefore, is absurd and not to be allowed.

THE second proposition in that argument, was, that the church of Rome, and all other churches in communion with her, do, actually, injoin a thing to be believed, which is grossly false; and, in consequence of it, a thing to be done, that is morally evil: The truth of which proposition has also been shewn, by proving, that the doctrine of Transubstantiation (which is held by the church of Rome) is utterly false, and the practice of adoring the host in the Eucharist, which she enjoins in consequence of it, proportionably evil. The conclusion, therefore, arising from both these propositions, is plain and certain, viz. that neither the church of Rome, nor any other church in communion with her, can have authority from God to require of any persons an absolute submission to her judgment in all, or any, points of religious faith. So that every one, notwithstanding any claims on her part, is fully entitled to a freedom of using his own judgment about them; and her taking away this liberty from those of her communion, is justly to be reckoned a most grievous usurpation, by which they are reduced to a state, like that, of which St. Austin says [r], “The miserable servitude of the mind is to take mere signs for the Things themselves, and not to be able to raise its view above the bodily creature to discern the eternal light of Truth.”

It is not certain that any Church, besides that of Rome, hath ever laid claim to Infallibility, and absolute authority in all points of Faith.

[r] Ea demum est miserabilis animæ servitus, signa pro rebus accipere, et supra creaturam corpoream oculum mentis ad hauriendum æternum lumen levare non posse. *Augustin. de doct. Christ. lib. iii. cap. 5.*

The Greek church and others have been said [s] to do it; but the facts have not been sufficiently proved. However, as some other church may, possibly, hereafter become so corrupt, as to make the same claim, I shall here use an argument that will, I hope, appear to be decisive against any such pretension, by what church soever it may be made. The evidence for the gospel of Jesus Christ depends, chiefly, on the testimony of a number of persons, who are said to have been his constant attendants, to have observed his conduct, to have heard his doctrine and precepts, to have been present at the many and great miracles he performed in order to shew that he came from God; and, particularly, to have seen and handled and conversed with him several times after he had risen from the dead. Their testimony as to these points is very particular and altogether consistent with itself. But now the testimony of men, though it is often true, and when it is so, is a just ground of belief; yet may also be false, and whenever it is so about matters of religion, must be of very ill consequence to those who are imposed upon by it: all men, therefore, must be both greatly concerned, and have a right to judge of the credibility of any such testimony. The credibility of all human testimony, as to matters of divine revelation, depends not only on the seeming abilities and integrity of those, by whom it is given, but also on the nature of the things they testify. For if they affirm things to have been done by a Person, pretending to divine Revelation, which Reason assures us, were not possible to have been done; if they represent him to have declared that things were true, which, as being absurd, or contrary to known facts, must certainly have been false; or to have enjoined, as by commission from God, any practices, visibly immoral or impious;---any thing of this sort, plainly contained in that system of doctrines and facts, which we are to receive upon their testimony, must invalidate

[s] J' ajoutay que les Grecs et les Ethiopiens estoient disposez à croire, sans examiner tout ce que la vraye Eglise leur proposoit. *Conf. de Bossuet avec Claude*, p. 167. ibid. p. 317 Mais, dit on, l'Eglise Romaine n'est pas la seule à l'attribuer cette autorité; l'Eglise Grecque et d'autres Eglises veulent aussi qu' on les croye sur leur parole. See p. 222.

and destroy the credit of it, however good the character of the witnesses, and their opportunities of being well informed, might otherwise appear to be. We must, in such a case, be obliged to conclude, that these persons were either deceived themselves, or intended to deceive us. For the characters of men, how fair soever they appear, may yet be deceitful. But the natural and fixed relations of things, and truth, which is exactly agreeable to them, cannot, in the present system, be otherwise than they are; nor in plain cases can they be otherwise than we see them to be. Our consideration, therefore, of the nature of the things testified, is highly proper, and even necessary, to assure us thoroughly of the credibility of any testimony given by men.

Now, from hence it follows, that every man must have a right to judge of all things to which that testimony relates. For if any part of those things was to be exempted from our judgment, that part might be such, as would justly take off the credibility of the testimony, which would, in consequence, affect the whole. We must, therefore, have a right to judge of the whole, so far as to be satisfied that it does not contain any thing contrary to piety, morality, or truth: God, in making us rational creatures, whose happiness will depend in great measure on the judgments we form, must have intended that we should do it. Now this fully proves that he cannot have invested any persons with an absolute authority to judge for all others about any matter of religion: For a right in any man to judge, finally, for himself, about every thing contained in the Christian religion, is inconsistent with a right or authority in any other person, to judge absolutely for him, and to oblige his assent to any thing repugnant to his own judgment. Every man, therefore, must have a right to judge finally for himself, in all matters of religion.

ACCORDINGLY there are many express and strong passages in the New Testament, which shew, that it was our Saviour's intention to allow, and encourage all men to exercise their private judgment in every matter of religion; not to lay them under an obligation of submitting, absolutely, to the decision of any man, or body of men,

concerning those matters. Our Lord asked the Jews, *Why they did not, even of themselves, judge what was right* [t]. He directed them [u] *to call no man master upon earth, but themselves to search the Scriptures* [w] in order to be satisfied that they testified of him. In like manner he bade them consider his [x] miracles. *If I do not the works of my Father, says he, believe me not*; which implied that they were at liberty, and even were obliged, to judge both of the nature and the design of those miracles, whether they were done in a good cause, and by power derived from God, or not.

INDEED, it ought to be observed, that miracles, or visible and remarkable changes in the ordinary course of nature beyond any human power to produce, tho' fit to excite the attention of mankind in the case of any truly divine revelation, yet were not, in all cases, designed by God to be, merely of themselves, decisive proofs that the persons who wrought them were commissioned by him. He seems to have permitted some things of this kind to be done by evil spirits, both under the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations, that men might from thence be laid under a necessity of considering more attentively the nature of the doctrines and facts therein contained; and of comparing them with the great standard principles of reason and morality; as well in order to improve their minds, as to try the good disposition of their hearts. This was expressly declared by Moses [y], *If a prophet, says he, give a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other Gods---and serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet:--- for the Lord your God proveth you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul.* And our Saviour had probably the like design in permitting, as he declares [z], *that there should arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect.* Behold, says he, *I have told you before* [a]. And the primitive Christians were in like manner forewarned by St. Paul, that *the man of sin should be*

[t] Luke xii. 57. [u] Matth. xxiii. 8. [w] John v. 39. [x] John x. 37.

[y] Deut. xiii. 1, 2, 3. [z] Matth. xxiv. 24. [a] Verse 25.

revealed with the working of all signs, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness [b], on which account they ought to be carefully on their guard against all false pretenders: And as they could not know, who would be such without due examination, he therefore exhorted them to prove all things [c]. He fairly submitted what he himself said to their judgment, and commends the Bereans for searching the scriptures [d] to see whether things were really as he represented them, or not. St. John, to the same purpose, says, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God. And again, Because many deceivers are come into the world, look to yourselves that you may not lose that which you have wrought [e]. These considerations and texts, one would hope, are abundantly sufficient to prove against the Romanists that our Saviour has not provided any constant infallible authority in any part of his church, to which he has obliged all, or any of his followers, absolutely to submit, but that, on the contrary, he plainly intends and requires, that all of them should duly exercise, and be finally determined by their own judgments, respectively, as to all matters of faith and practice in religion.

BUT are all men able to judge of such points with any good effect? Can wholly unlearned and labouring people in villages or in towns examine and determine rightly for themselves, about the genuineness and divine inspiration of the Scriptures; about the exactness of the different translations; or about the true sense of many passages in them? Must they not, by their presumptuous attempts to do things so plainly and so much beyond their abilities, be led into errors pernicious to them? Will they not often pervert the holy Scriptures to their own destruction?

THIS objection was urged against the Protestant cause by archbishop de Fenelon, in his letters to the duke of Orleans, who was, afterwards, regent of France, during the minority of this Lewis XV. That prelate represents the low and illiterate part of mankind to be as unable to make a true judgment of these and some

[b] 2 Thess. ii, 3, 9, 10.

[d] Acts xvii, 11.

[c] 1 Thess. v. 21.

[e] 1 Ep. iv, 1.

other points, as a man, confined by a palsy to his bed, is unable to get out of it, by himself, in case of any danger. Accordingly, he affirms, that it would have been inconsistent with the goodness of God, if he had not provided an infallible authority in his church for the instruction of such unlearned persons in the truths, that are necessary to eternal salvation. And it is remarkable, that the learned Mr. Bayle, tho' he certainly was not a friend to popery in general, yet, as to this point, went so far as to allow that the strength of the church of Rome undoubtedly consists in the objections she makes about the case of such ignorant persons, whom Protestants suppose to be able of themselves to distinguish what is true, from what is false, in an immense heap of controversies. The archbishop's assertion shall soon be considered with all the respect due to the character of that good prelate. But, First, with regard to Mr. Bayle, I would observe, that he (who was always disposed to make the most of an objection, especially concerning any part of religion,) represents this the stronger, by not stating the Protestant opinion with exactness; for we do not pretend, that unlearned persons are able, merely of themselves, to judge rightly, or to gain a competent satisfaction, about questions of this sort. For want of skill in the antient languages, it is, visibly, impossible that they should read the holy Scriptures in the originals, or know, at the first hand, what the primitive Christians, or others wrote about them. All that we maintain is, that in a country, like this of Great Britain, (where the Christian religion is professed publicly and preached, and a proper degree of freedom, in speaking and writing about it, is allowed,) men of common sense, and due application, tho' they be unlearned and in low ranks of life, yet are capable of having such evidence about all necessary points relating to the divine inspiration, the faithful version, and the true sense of the holy Scriptures, as may be to them sufficient grounds of a rational faith. For an unlearned man may easily consult with several of the learned, as well laymen as clergymen, of known good characters, and by them may be informed,

IN the first place, of the principal facts, which are evidences to us, that the books of the New Testament, at present in our hands, were written by the Apostles and others, whose names they bear, and are now, in all points of moment, the same as they were at first. It may not be easy to acquaint an unlearned man with all the particular things about times, places, writings, and their authors that are known to the learned, and are of some weight with them in regard to the holy Scriptures: but the principal and really decisive facts may be, with sufficient exactness and force, represented to him. He may be told that the Christian religion, which somewhat above 1700 years ago had its beginning in Judea, or Palestine, was from thence, in less than two hundred years, propagated into most parts of the world then known, in all which countries religious societies or churches of Christians were immediately formed for the worship of God thro' Jesus Christ, as the redeemer of mankind. The persons of whom those churches consisted were in those times remarkably zealous for their religion, which they professed at the imminent hazard of their fortunes and their lives. They must, therefore, no doubt, have been solicitous to know whether any books, that were published under the names of some of the Apostles, or others revised and approved by them, and which professed to contain a history of the life, the actions, and doctrine, of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, were, really, written by those persons or not. And for this inquiry they had sufficient opportunities, because those books were published while the authors were living, at which time, as well as in all ages afterwards, Christians met together on every Lord's day for the worship of God, in those assemblies, the Scriptures of the New as well of the Old Testament were read, and exhortations were made upon them; and the churches in different cities and countries held frequent correspondence by letters and messengers with each other. Upon such inquiry most of the books of the New Testament (especially the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles) were received as genuine by all the churches. Those books, which were by some of the churches doubted of at first, were afterwards, upon farther inquiry, also

also received: and other books, which pretended to be the works of some of the Apostles, were rejected as spurious; which circumstance shewed the care of the churches in their inquiry. The books, which were received as genuine, were kept in all the churches with the greatest care and veneration. Many Christians had copies of them in the original language, or in very early translations; and divers of them would rather have suffered death than delivered them up, as appeared in the persecution by the emperor Dioclesian. After these Scriptures were thus widely dispersed into so many and so distant churches, it was morally impossible to suppress or corrupt, or to make any great alterations in them: and many of those Christian churches, having remained in succession to this time, in the same countries, very distant from each other, where they were at first planted; and having always retained a like veneration for those Scriptures, as the rule of their faith and worship, they have actually preserved them without any material alteration: So that upon comparing many copies brought together from different and distant countries (tho' many variations of small moment have happened in transcribing so numerous copies) yet they have all been found to agree in all points of importance. That all these facts are truly related, an unlearned man may with reason be assured, not only from the testimony of the particular persons whom he consulted, but also from the agreeing accounts of them that have been published in his country by many others of the learned, without being at all, or, at least with any good reason contested. Of this public agreement about them he may be very easily and fully assured, and upon it he may have a just reliance, as confirming the truth of the facts which have, by the persons whom he consulted, been related to him.

AND from a concurrence of both these same evidences he may also be assured that the books of the New Testament, thus proved to be genuine, have been faithfully translated into the language of his own country. He will reasonably suppose, that, if this translation

was in any point of moment remarkably faulty, some of the many persons who understand both the languages, would discover and expose the faults committed in it, which not being done, as he may easily and fully be assured it is not, he may from thence with reason conclude there is no cause for doing it.

AND from these following considerations he may also be satisfied, that the things contained in these Scriptures must have been true. For, in the first place, the writers of those books had full and sufficient opportunities of knowing all the facts that they relate. Most of them were attendants upon Jesus Christ, during the whole course of his public life; they were acquainted with his conduct, they had heard all his discourses, doctrines, and precepts; they saw all his actions, especially his miracles, which, in general, were so public and of such a kind, that they could not themselves have been deceived about them; above all, not in that great event of his having risen again from the dead, which was the chief evidence of the truth of his pretensions. Nor is it conceivable that they should design to impose upon the world in their accounts of those matters; because, First, they published those accounts during their own lives, and in the country where the things were said to have been done; and where many persons must, certainly, have known whether things so public in their nature were done or not. The writers, therefore, of those accounts, had they falsified in them, would certainly have been contradicted and opposed; they must have expected to be so. Now the apprehension of being thus treated, and of incurring the shame of being convicted of relating falsities, would have kept them from doing it, unless they had a view of gaining some considerable interest by running this hazard. But such a view of interest they could not have; for if this religion was false, they must know it could never succeed in the world. They must have been sensible, that they had against them the passions and prejudices, the learning and eloquence, the wealth, policy, and power not only of the Jews, but of the Heathen world. Over all these advantages, a small number of poor unknown, illiterate men as they were, without any power, or credit, or connexion

nexions or policy, could never have had any hopes of prevailing, had they been conscious that they themselves were impostors. They must, on the contrary, have been fully sensible that their attempting to publish and maintain these facts as true, and to propagate this religion, would immediately draw upon them not only general contempt and disgrace, but violent ill usage and persecutions, that would end only with their lives. And, after this life, they must, if they believed even natural religion, have feared that the vengeance of God would fall upon them as impostors: So that they had no possible views of interest to put them upon relating falsties about their religion: On the contrary, they had the strongest reasons to keep them from doing it. Yet they actually did publish these accounts as true; and used their utmost endeavours to propagate this religion against all opposition; and notwithstanding all their sufferings, which they chearfully sustained, they laid down even their lives in confirmation of its truth.

IN doing which, they could not have been enthusiasts, who had wrought themselves up to a belief, that those things, which they said of this religion, had been true, when they really had not been so. For though it may be possible for men, whose heads are not quite sound, to imagine that they hear and see things, which, in reality, they do not; yet that this could not have been the case of the Apostles we may be fully assured from the success they had in their undertaking. For if they had been such enthusiastic and visionary men, other persons, to whom they applied themselves, would soon have discovered that they were of this character; and, on that account, would never have been influenced by them. Nor, indeed, in a case where their profession of this religion must expose them to great sufferings, would the generality of mankind have been persuaded to believe by the bare testimony of one or two of the Apostles, how rational soever they had appeared to be, unless they had supported and strengthened their testimony by works plainly miraculous, which justly gained both attention and credit to all they said. Their wonderful success, therefore, proves both that they must have been rational men, and must also have wrought unquestionable miracles. From these two considerations, there-

E

fore,

fore, of their probity (approved by their sufferings, and of their wonderful success, which latter could not have been such as it was without known and great miracles) we may be assured that their testimony was true. The personal character of Jesus Christ, his doctrines, miracles, and predictions, his death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, were, in all points, such as they are in the holy Scriptures related to have been. By consequence, he must have been, as he said, the Son of God, and his Apostles, commissioned by him to put all necessary things in his religion into writing, for the instruction of mankind in all ages, must have been, as he promised they should be, divinely inspired. And of this truth, and the others deducible justly from all the particulars here abovementioned, (which, if duly represented, may easily be apprehended) an unlearned man may have a very just and rational belief.

THE Romanists will not, indeed, allow that this evidence from the mere testimony of men, be it ever so probable, is a ground sufficient whereon to raise a true Christian faith. And as our evidence for the genuineness of the Scriptures does, in our Protestant scheme, depend chiefly on the testimony of the primitive Christians, who lived after the Apostles, and though they were justly credible, yet certainly were not divinely inspired, or, strictly speaking, infallible, therefore the Romanists say, that this testimony is not a ground sufficient for the faith required in a Christian, which ought to be built upon infallible grounds. And as no such ground can be had, unless the catholic church be infallible, it is, therefore, necessary to suppose, that God has, for this purpose, made his church infallible. This doctrine is plainly avowed by the celebrated bishop Bossuet, in his Conference with Mr. Claude, p. 328. He is speaking of Christians, who have never read the holy Scriptures, and asks upon what grounds they believe them to be divinely inspired. If they only depend upon the testimony of men who are not infallible, this truth, he says, is merely human; and though indeed, p. 346, it is like that by which we believe there is such a city as Constantinople, and there was formerly such a person as Alexander the Great, yet this faith is not sufficient for a Christian, who, p. 345, unless he will renounce his religion, ought to

to act upon the motive of faith truly divine. And no such faith is possible to be had, but upon the authority of the infallible church, which therefore God hath provided for that purpose.

BUT by this notion concerning divine faith, the Romanists are carried into an absurdity not to be avoided. For how does any one know, that the church is infallible? Experience shews us, that this knowledge is not owing to a divine revelation, made to every single person. The Romanists do not pretend to this. They agree, that it can only be derived from the holy Scriptures. But withal they insist, that these very Scriptures, in order to be in a condition to afford this knowledge or faith, must themselves have been first proved, by the authority of the infallible church, to have been divinely inspired. So that, in their scheme, the truth of one fact is necessary to be proved by another, which latter, at the same time, needs equally to be proved by the former; from whence it is visible, that neither of them, in reality, can have any proof at all. For this is the same case, as if two bodies, of which each in itself is quite void of any light, should be supposed to have light reflected upon the one from the other, or as if two noughts should be supposed to make a sum. Both which suppositions are visibly absurd. Thus the Romish notion, that the only true Christian faith must needs be grounded on the infallibility of the church, destroys itself by producing an absurdity. Besides which, since I have shewn, from other considerations, that the church is not infallible, it must, therefore, be sufficient that our belief of the divine inspiration of holy Scriptures, as well as of all other points relating to the truth of the Gospel, is grounded upon the like credible human testimony, on which we believe other facts at a like distance of time and place. Upon this evidence, from credible human testimony, all men act in the management of their secular affairs of the greatest importance. They venture their wealth, and even their lives, by sea and land. It is, therefore, reasonable, and God actually requires, that they should act on the like highly probable, though merely human, evidence with regard to the concerns of religion, and, in particular, as to their belief of the genuineness and the divine inspiration of the holy Scriptures.

AND when a man is thus reasonably satisfied about these points, he may, with less difficulty, judge of their contents, as far as will be necessary to his salvation. The main substance of them was at first preached to the poor, the unlearned or ignorant, and was enough understood by them: Our Saviour says, in his figurative language, that the truths of his Gospel were *revealed unto babes* [g], that is, to persons of the lowest rank and capacity; and may, therefore, no doubt, be comprehended by such at present, who can either read the Scriptures, or have opportunity of knowing them. For he promises, that *whosoever doeth his will shall know of his doctrine whether it be of God* [h]. The necessary terms, on which happiness in the life to come is proposed to mankind, are so plainly expressed, and so frequently repeated in the Scriptures, that they cannot easily be mistaken. Common sense, with an honest heart, the ordinary grace of the holy Spirit, and the instruction of learned men, in cases which require it, will, in general, be sufficient to make any persons, who hear or read the Scriptures often, and with due attention, comprehend as much of them, as will be necessary to their salvation. However, I would not be understood to affirm, that all Christians have been, or now are, able to judge rightly of several questions relating to the Scriptures, which, considered of themselves, are of importance in religion. Every one, who knows the state of Europe, must be sensible, that in divers parts of it numbers of persons may at any time be found, who, though in their infancy they have been baptised into the Christian religion, yet afterwards have heard very little about it, have had nobody to inform them of the arguments for the divine inspiration of the Scriptures; are neither able of themselves to read those books, nor have any opportunities of hearing them read, or of gaining such knowledge of the contents of them, as would be requisite, if such persons were ever so well disposed, to their forming a competent judgement about them.

BUT what inference are we to draw from these observations? Are we to conclude with archbishop de Fenelon, and the church

[g] Matth. xi. 25.

[h] John vii. 17.

of Rome, that God in his goodness must have provided an infallible authority for the assistance of such persons? No: this conclusion would be visibly false. For if his perfections made it morally necessary for him to do this, they would also make it necessary for him to provide that all such ignorant Christians should, in some way or other, have benefit from it. But this we find is not actually done. There are at all times many Christians, who never had an opportunity of receiving instructions from any priest, or other member of the church of Rome, (nor know any thing of its infallibility or absolute authority.) From whence the plain consequence is, that the Romish way of arguing is inconclusive. For if God, consistently with his perfections, may suffer some Christians to live in ignorance or error, without having any advantage of the supposed infallibility, then he cannot be obliged to provide it for any; since what he may, consistently with his perfections, omit to do in the case of any Christians, he may likewise omit in the similar case of any other Christians, and even of all. Which consideration shews, that the Romanists are guilty of no small presumption for arguing, as in this case they do, from mere natural reason, that God must have provided such an infallibility.

THE right inference to be made from these dispensations of divine providence, is, that God, (who has placed men in circumstances that have occasioned their ignorance or error about any points of the Christian religion to be, morally speaking, unavoidable,) will not require more from them, than they have been able to perform, but will reckon it sufficient, that they make the best use they can of the abilities and opportunities that he has afforded them. Such a conduct on their part, would satisfy any equitable master on earth; and much more assuredly will it be accepted by our heavenly Father, who is perfectly good, and whose *mercies are over all his works* [1]. He, certainly, will not punish any men for the want of such measures of faith, as they were not able to attain. There are on the contrary grounds to hope, that he will, in some degree, reward those persons, who have done what they

[1] Psal. cv. 9.

could towards knowing, or believing and serving him a-right, tho' for want of some advantages and opportunities, they have remained in ignorance as to some things, and have fallen into error as to others.

FOR it is of moment to be observed, that the value of faith, or knowledge in religion, is to be estimated from the disposition and conduct of the mind in seeking after them, and from the moral or practical improvement that is made upon having attained them. An implicit faith, which men, without any reasoning of their own, have received from the mere authoritative dictates of the persons by whom they have been educated or instructed, may, indeed, supposing it is a right faith, be advantageous to the believers. It may in some measure, restrain them from vice, and excite them to virtue. And these good effects of it will be of value in the sight of God. But such a faith, which has not been grounded upon reasoning or inquiry, (besides that it will oftner be wrong than right) will, even when it is right, be always in danger of being unsettled and overthrown by the objections of others, or by the influence of irregular passions in the men themselves. Such a faith is, by our Saviour, compared to a *house built upon the sand* [k]. On these accounts, God who has committed to all men, in some degree, the greatly improveable talent of reason, by no means intends that they should, with a false humility, either keep it as it were *wrapped up in a napkin* [l], without using it at all, or should offer it up, as some Romanists pretend to do, by way of sacrifice to him. To govern our passions by our reason, is, certainly, our duty, and may be considered as a fit sacrifice to God. But to sacrifice our reason so far, as to believe things that appear plainly impossible, can never be our duty; because, as I have shewn, it must tend to subvert the foundations of all moral knowledge and practice. God requires no more of us but that we should duly employ our reason about matters of religion, which are our principal concern, and about the evidence that he has given for the truth of them; that they should exert it with a diligence proportioned to the great im-

[k] Matt. vii. 26.

[l] Luke xix. 20.

portance of those things, and that, in order to their seeing these evidences in their proper force, the mind of each of the inquirers should not be influenced by any undue passion, nor by any prejudice, which has arisen from such passion, but should be really desirous to know all the truths in which they are concerned, should use diligent endeavours to this purpose, and be disposed to practice in all points according to what they find to be their duty, with respect to God, to themselves, and to all mankind. It is possible for men to have these good dispositions to a considerable degree in their hearts, even when they are not in circumstances to discover the truth of religion in several points. And if men be really in these dispositions, God, who sees the heart, will graciously accept them as being there, even when, for want of other advantages, they do not produce any suitable effects. And, possibly, in some cases his abundant goodness may provide for such persons, those evidences or instructions they wanted towards farther measures of belief. He did this in the case of the Æthiopian nobleman mentioned in Acts viii. 28. This person gave signs of his possessing the dispositions abovementioned. Having had some notions about a Messiah, who was to arise among the Jews, and having, probably, been directed for instructions about him to their antient prophecies, he was reading one of them even in his journey. And when Philip the deacon, appointed by the providence of God to meet him, asked whether he understood what he read, he frankly acknowledged that he did not well comprehend it, but shewed his desire to be better informed. He took up Philip for this purpose into his chariot, and as soon as he had a reasonable satisfaction about the design, and evidences of the Gospel, he readily believed and desired to take upon him the obligations of it. On account of these good dispositions in his heart, God was pleased to provide in an extraordinary manner for his instruction, and increasing his faith.

He did the like in the case of the Roman centurion, Cornelius, mentioned Acts x. This officer was virtuously and religiously disposed. He prayed often to God, and gave much alms to persons in want. On which accounts signal and extraordinary mercy was shewn him by God; who, tho' indeed he had also a view to notify
to

to the converted Jews, his design to receive the Gentiles also into the covenant of grace, yet might easily have done that by other means. He chose Cornelius in particular for that purpose, because he knew him to be a fit object of his mercy and grace, as he also had found the Æthiopian nobleman before.

However, these instances I own, will not prove that God is, in justice, or even in goodness, obliged to make a provision like this for all well-disposed persons, who have not sufficient evidence for their giving a rational assent to the truths of the gospel in general, or any particulars relating to it. He is, without question, intirely at liberty to make what difference he pleases both in the original capacities of his creatures, and in the opportunities he affords for the improvement of them. There are, probably, some beings, whose intellectual and active powers are, in their extensive operations, above what we at present can imagine. And we know there are others here on earth, who, though indeed rational in some degree, are put into such a condition of life, that they labour for the most part of it in caverns under ground, with small opportunities when they come out, for the improvement of their reason, either by an exercise of it themselves, or by instructions from others. How very different allotments are these! Yet can any of those, who have the lowest of them, say with reason to his maker, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not a potter both power and right enough over his clay to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour? And are not the power and right of God over his creatures, with regard to the degrees of perfection he will give them, fully as absolute? He, certainly, is at liberty to put any of his creatures into such a condition of existence as will, if they act rightly, be upon the whole, much better than not existing at all. And he is equally at liberty, whether he will give them any reward for their good dispositions, or for the improvements they make in consequence of them. For no man, in any case, does more than he ought to do. On the contrary every one falls very much short of performing his duty: and therefore no one can have a claim of right to any reward.

HOWEVER, since we, from the gospel of Christ, have just reason to believe that our Almighty creator, with goodness, on his part, immense and infinite, tho' by us quite unmerited, will condescend to accept, and even reward our faith, tho' it is but imperfect, provided it is as much as we could well attain, and is joined with good practice sincerely endeavoured, tho', in many things, deficient; there may be, from thence, some ground to hope, that he will also give a proportioned reward to lower degrees of a like faith and practice, when no higher could be attained, and when all the talents afforded have been duly improved for the attainment of these lower ones: And that even error, as to religion, when it has been, morally speaking, unavoidable, will not be punished; but rather that, when it hath been joined with dispositions otherwise good, these latter will not, on account of that error, wholly miss of a reward. The perfect unlimited goodness of God affords a foundation not at all improbable for such a hope.

THIS doctrine, indeed, upon which our excellent countryman Chillingworth, and many other judicious Protestants insist, bishop Bossuet and the church of Rome very vehemently decry. They say that it puts all sects of Christians, if not all other men, upon an equal foot as to eternal salvation; and so, disposing men to be indifferent what religion they are of, it hurts very much, and even tends to extirpate, orthodox Christianity [m]. But these charges are made without reason against us: For the church of England in

[m] Quelque evidence qu'on veuille poser dans l'Ecriture, elle n'est pas telle qu'il n'y ait diverses manieres de l'entendre, dont quelques unes sont des erreurs contre la foi; c'est pourquoi il y a deux regles suffisantes pour sauver les hommes. La premiere, de recevoir le texte de l'Ecriture avec toutes ses consequences necessaires incontestables et indubitables: La seconde, dans tout le reste où l'on pourroit errer contre la foi, de tacher de croire l'Ecriture selon son vrai sens, sans se condamner les uns les autres; parce que pour condamner, il faut être juge, et, en matiere de religion, juge infallible. Or il n'y a point de juge de cette sorte, l'Eglise n'est pas infallible. Chaque particulier l'est encore moins dans ses sentimens; donc qu'on ne se juge point les uns les autres, et que chacun demeure innocemment et impunement dans son sens, ce que est en termes formels l'assurance du salut de chaque Chrestien dans sa religion deduite manifestement de ce qu'il y a point un juge infallible. Il n'y a donc point de milieu entre croire l'Eglise infallible, et sauver tout le monde dans

in her xviiiith article, exprefsly censures thofe who affirm “ that
 “ a man fhall be faved in the law or feft that he profeffeth, if he
 “ be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light
 “ of nature.” She fays, that “ the holy Scripture fets forth the
 “ name of Jefus Chrift, as that only by which men may be faved.”
 So that ſhe plainly holds, that every man is obliged to embrace and
 continue in this religion, if he have opportunities for doing it. And,
 by conſequence, that (if he fails of ſo doing, either by neglect of pro-
 per inquiry and attention, or from ill paſſions, or from prejudices,
 which, by his fault, have ariſen from them) he will, on any of theſe
 accounts, without repentance, be excluded from eternal ſalvation.
 And her judgment is the ſame about Chriſtians, who are juſtly blame-
 able for the errors they hold as to any particular points of this re-
 ligion. In her articles ſhe censures divers of theſe: And ſhe thinks,
 that the ſtrong perſuaſion of ſuch faultily erroneous perſons, that they
 are in the right, will not excuſe them in the ſight of God, or give
 them any juſt ground to hope for eternal ſalvation. Thoſe Pro-
 teſtants, therefore, who adhere to the doctrine of the church of
 England, cannot juſtly be reproached with thinking that all religi-
 ons are equally true or good in themſelves, or equally conducive to-
 wards making men eternally ſaved. On the contrary, we clear-
 ly profeſs and maintain, that there is only one religion, (to wit,
 the Chriſtian, as it is delivered in the holy Scriptures,) that is in it-
 ſelf true, or effectual for that purpoſe: And that this religion
 ought to be, with diligence and integrity, inquired after, embraced,
 and adhered to, by all men. Conſequentially, if any one, who has
 opportunity of inquiring after, and ſeeing the evidence for it, thro’
 ſloth or negligence, prejudice or paſſion, or any other undue cauſe

ſa religion ; et n’eſtre pas Catholique, c’eſt neceſſairement être indifferent. *Boffuet*,
6me. Avertiſſ. p. 283.

Où l’on voit une tolerance parfaite et le ſalut accorde ſur le fondement commun
 des indifferens, qui eſt de ſauver tous ceux qui ſe ſervent de leur raiſon pour cher-
 cher la verité dans l’Ecriture. *Boffuet*, *ibid. p. 285.*

Il n’y a q’une ſeul remede à une dangereuſe maladie, qui tend manifeſtement à
 l’extinction du Chriſtianité et de toute religion. *Ibid.*

fails

fails to see and embrace the truth, he will, upon that failure, in his bounden duty, be justly excluded from eternal salvation.

ALL that we maintain, or rather humbly hope, with regard to men who err as to any points of religion, is, that if they have really made the best use they could of the abilities and opportunities they have had, and yet, as we think in some cases they may, have missed of the truth, in particular points, they will not, on that account, fall under the displeasure of God; but, on account of the good dispositions of their hearts, will be excused, accepted, and, in some degree, rewarded by him. Not that we ascribe the mercy that will be shewn to them to the erroneous religion, which they profess; but, solely to the infinite goodness of God, thro' the absolute merits of Jesus Christ, who is set forth as an atonement and propitiation for the sins of all men, even of those who have not known him. Now where can there be any ill consequence of this doctrine? Does it tend, as the Romanists say, to make men indifferent or unconcerned whether they find the true religion or not? On the contrary, when this doctrine plainly declares, that there is only one true religion; that men are obliged with their utmost diligence and integrity of heart to seek after, and, if possible for them, to find it: That, if it be found, it will greatly conduce to the increase of their happiness, as it will raise them to greater degrees of moral improvement; and that, if they fail, by their own truly blameable misconduct, to find, embrace, and adhere to it, they will, of a certainty, be miserable for ever. What motives can be stronger than all these are, to put them upon such a search? If men have any consideration at all, or regard to their own eternal interest, they will from hence be led to inquire diligently and honestly, as they ought to do, into the evidences and truths of religion: And if they so inquire, they will be likely to attain to the knowledge of the truth. It is plain, therefore, that our doctrine is so far from tending to extirpate or hurt the truth of religion, that, on the contrary, it tends to make it more generally received, and more constantly adhered to, and practised. At the same time it certainly is most agreeable to the mercy and goodness of God, not to suppose that he expects to *reap where he hath not sown* [n], but that he will

[n] Matt. xxv. 24.

graciously accept and reward men, according to their use of what they had, not of what they had not. Now if this most reasonable supposition be made, there is no need, as the arch-bishop of Cambray imagines, to suppose that God has provided an absolute infallible authority for the direction of men to the truth in religion, because they may be saved eternally without it.

AND, if there be no need of such an authority, for the sake of unlearned or ignorant men, there is, certainly, none for the sake of men of learning, who have both natural abilities, and opportunities sufficient, if they be duly improved, for the discovery of the truth. Archbishop de Fenelon, indeed, formed an argument even from the case of these persons, to prove the necessity of an absolute and infallible authority in the church. He observes that the learned men themselves need much to be humbled and made sensible of their own incapacity. By their very reasoning they come to be more in doubt and unsettlement of mind than the ignorant are. They are obstinate in maintaining the most absurd opinions, and have, therefore, as much need as the unlearned people, of a superior authority to abate their presumptions, to correct their prejudices, to end their disputes, &c. The account here given of the faults and misconducts of some learned men, tho', indeed, it bears hard upon them, yet seems to be truer than one could wish. But supposing it to be altogether true, yet how does it follow, that God must have provided an infallible authority for the sake of such persons? There is nothing in reason or in the holy Scriptures to support this conclusion. For if we are to argue from God's perfections, that (even after he has given men abilities and opportunities sufficient both to know and to perform their duty, and they have abused or neglected to use them,) he will give them yet greater, where stops this argument? At this rate he must render them incapable both of error and of sin. But this is visibly contrary to fact. And, therefore, we can only conclude with reason from God's perfections, that he will give to all men abilities and opportunities proportioned to what will be required of them in matters of religion; and that, if they fail of the improvement they ought to make of them, they will be here left to the

the natural effects of their negligence and perverseness, and hereafter will be punished as they deserve.

THESE suggestions of our reason are confirmed by the representations of the holy Scriptures. When the Jews were regardless of the frequent admonitions, which God had given them by his prophets, to repent sincerely, and amend their ways, he threatens them at length, that, *the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid* [o]. He determined to use no other means with them, but to leave them to themselves.

To the same purpose are declarations made by our Saviour in his parable of the unprofitable servant, who having had a talent intrusted with him, neglected to use it. *Take therefore from him, saith our Lord, the talent that hath been unimproved, and give it to him who hath ten talents; for unto every one that hath, shall be given, and from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.*

AND St. Paul, in his first epistle to Timothy, having mentioned some Christians of that age, as *dotting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railing, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth,* bids Timothy *from such withdraw himself* [q]. All which passages plainly shew, that, if men do not use, and duly improve the powers and advantages which God affords them, he will be so far from giving them greater, that he will, in some cases, withdraw even those they had before; or, at least, will not grant them those aids of his holy Spirit, which would have been vouchsafed to them, had they not before been wanting to themselves. So that the argument of archbishop de Fenelon for the necessity of an infallible authority for the sake of learned men, is plainly inconclusive.

UPON the whole, From the very gross error held, and the sinful practice enjoined by, the church of Rome, which pretends to infallibility;

FROM the nature of the testimonial evidence given for the Gospel, as being a revelation from God; And

[o] Isaiah xxix. 14.

[p] Matt. xxv. 28.

[q] 1 Tim. vi. 4, 5.

FROM the express and repeated declarations of the Scriptures of the New Testament;

IT is evident, that God intended to give to every one a right to judge at all times ultimately for himself in all matters of religion.

BUT here it is of great moment to observe, that God, in giving us a liberty and right of judging, doth not grant us a right or liberty of erring with impunity. He does not make it (as some have crudely asserted) a thing wholly innocent to err.

HE will certainly punish for all errors, as well as for other crimes, that might have been avoided by our proper care: And therefore it is highly our concern to take proper care not to err.

T R A C T II.

Of the Liberty of publickly worshiping God.

THE right that men have to worship God in public, depends upon their obligation to do it. For if neither reason nor divine revelation required this worship, so that it was a thing quite indifferent, whether men should ever perform it or not, all sovereigns would, in that case, have a right to forbid it to their subjects, either as engaging them in needless expenses of time and money, or as tending to produce among them, at least on some occasions, such discords and contests as may disturb the civil state. But if, from right reason and the holy Scripture, it evidently appears to be the will of God, that all men should pay a public worship to him, no sovereign can then have authority to forbid or hinder their doing it. Their obligation must certainly be joined with a right to do it. In order, therefore, to settle the latter, the former is necessary to be considered; and that obligation may be clearly deduced from the capacities of mankind, and the relations we bear to God, and to each other.

By a proper exercise of our reason upon ourselves, and the visible world, we cannot fail of attaining to some knowledge of the being and perfections of God, and of the relations we bear to him,

as our Creator, our absolute Lord, and continual benefactor. From whence it follows, that we are obliged to acknowledge his perfections, and address both our thanks and our prayers to him: Because our so doing, even in private, tends to preserve and improve in our minds a due sense of his perfections, with suitable dispositions to fear, and love, and endeavour to resemble him as far as we are able; and these were the chief ends for which we were made, and are preserved in being.

BUT to worship God in private, is not sufficient, because he has formed near relations between all men, as having all the same nature, and being the offspring of him the same father. On account of these relations, he obliges us to have an affection for each other, and as he hath given us the power of speech, in order to our making reciprocally known our thoughts and desires, he cannot but require, that, (out of a concern for the welfare of each other, and for his glory, which here on earth chiefly arises from the improvement and happiness of mankind,) we should, as often as we have opportunity, join together for his public worship.

FIRST, because, when numbers of men assemble often for this purpose, the examples of some may, probably, have a good influence on others, in regard both to their belief and practice. The notions concerning morality and religion (which in a greater or less degree are common to all men) have, in some of them, been very much improved by education, or their own attention, while many others are so unthinking, and uninstructed, that, merely of themselves, they would hardly ever come to be sufficiently sensible of their obligations to God, or be disposed to perform them. But if men of better knowledge give examples of worshiping God in public, with an appearance of doing it from their hearts, the consequence may, and probably will be, that many of those, who might not otherwise have ever thought of their obligation in this respect, may be induced to consider it, and, as men are generally prone to imitation, especially in any thing to which nature disposes them, they may be led think, to see, and practise their duty in this point, they may come to believe, to fear and love God.

YET

YET further, the assembling of numbers of men for his public worship, will, naturally, tend to produce in them proper affections towards other men. For by frequently offering their joint prayers to him, as the maker of all things, they will be, naturally, put upon considering, that they, all alike, are his creatures, and all ever under his governing providence; that he, as their common father, allows to all of them an equal access to him, and regards their prayers, not according to their outward condition in this life, but according to their real faith and piety. From which considerations, the wealthy and powerful, certainly, ought to be, and, if they reflect at all, must become, in some degree, sensible, that he, who is acquainted with every the least thing that passes among them, will, at some time or other, be the avenger of all iniquity and acts of oppression done against those, of whom he is the protector, and whose low and indigent station at present, he has purposely appointed; that the powerfull and wealthy, as being his stewards, may have opportunities of shewing not only their justice, but their compassion and benevolence towards their brethren, in relieving their wants, and doing to them all the good that is, properly speaking, in their power. On the other hand, those in lower life may be naturally led to reflect, that their superiors in dignity and wealth derive these advantages from the providence of God, and therefore, ought, on his account, to be duly respected by their inferiors; who are obliged, with humility and acquiescence, to go thro' the labours of the station, which God hath assigned them for the aid and benefit of their superiors, as well as their own tryal and improvement in virtue. Since these dispositions tend to the happiness of mankind, and to the glory of God, no doubt can be made, but that public worship, which is, naturally, in some degree, productive of them, must be our duty. Reason teaches us, that God cannot but require this worship of us, even tho' we had no engagements to each other, but what are derived from our having had all the same origin from God, the same rational nature, and dependent condition.

But when we are considered as imbodyed together in civil society, there arises from thence a further obligation to unite in public

Tract II. *Of the Liberty of publickly worshipping God.* 41

lic worship. For in that state there will sometimes be mercies and benefits, common to the whole society, to be asked of God, and thanksgivings to be paid him, on account of such, when they have been received. Now it visibly is fit, it is morally necessary, that all, who are partakers of these benefits, in their social capacity, should join together in supplications to God for obtaining them, and in returns of due acknowledgment and thanksgiving for having received them. This is so much the voice of nature, that all civilized nations have been sensible, that they were obliged to pay such public homage to God, and their practice was generally suitable to it. They often performed it with great expence, by erecting temples for that purpose with much beauty and magnificence, by maintaining many priests to officiate in those sacred solemnities, by killing great numbers of animals as sacrifices, and burning large quantities of costly perfumes; all which circumstances shewed their sense of the expedience and necessity of public worship.

BUT this duty is still more plainly enjoined by our Lord Jesus Christ. For all, who embrace his religion, are formed by him into a spiritual society, of which he himself is the head, and of which every one is required, if it be in his power, to become a member, and is likewise obliged to shew that he adheres to that engagement, not only by professing this religion, but also by assembling with his Christian brethren to offer praises, thanks, and supplications to God in the name of our ever blessed Redeemer. They are the more especially obliged to do this, in order to partake of that sacrament of the eucharist, which was intended to be a memorial of his death, and a token of their spiritual union with him and with each other, and a mean of their receiving his gracious assistances, *For we being many (says St. Paul,) are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread* [r]. From whence it is plain, our Lord intended to require, that all Christians should join together, as they have opportunity, in public worship. It is a part of that confession of him before men, which he requires of us, and a wilful neglect of it, without a just reason, is

[r] 1. Cor. x. 17.

what he will not fail to resent: for whoever refuses, or totally neglects, to do those public actions, which imply an acknowledgment of the immense benefits of our redemption, and were appointed for that very purpose, may, with reason, be considered as greatly wanting in his duty to his Saviour, and will be punished for this neglect. On the other hand, that men might also be engaged by considerations of a different kind to public worship, our Lord has promised, that wherever any number of them, even two or three, shall be *gathered together in his name* [s], he will be peculiarly present with them, and graciously disposed to grant their requests for the aids of his holy Spirit, as far as he knows their case to require them. In the temple of Solomon, God was pleased to exhibit a sensible mark of his immediate presence by a radiant light or *glory* in it [t]: But, under the Gospel, men are to be influenced by their reason, rather than by their senses; and, therefore, no such visible sign of the divine presence appears in our places of public worship. We, however, may be assured, that our Saviour is not less present there, for all the purposes of spiritual assistance and consolation; which benefits are the greatest that men can possibly enjoy while they are on earth; and, therefore, they ought to be proportionably solicitous to render themselves partakers of them. And that they might not fail of them for want of knowing the fittest times for this public worship, the apostles of our Lord, inspired by him, appear to have set apart *the first day of each week* [u], more especially for this important purpose, and in commemoration of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. Accordingly the primitive Christians observed those days with a proper solemnity and strictness of devotion: *They continued not only in the apostles doctrine, but in their fellowship or communion in breaking of bread, and in prayers* [w], that is, in all acts of public worship. St. John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, when, towards the close of his life, he was so infirm that he could not walk to church, caused himself to be carried thither in the arms of his disciples. And the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews earnestly presses them *to hold fast the pro-*

[s] Matt. xviii. 20. [t] 2 Chron. vii. 1, &c. [u] Acts xx. 7. [w] Acts ii. 42.

session of their faith—without forsaking their religious assemblies [x]. He did not allow even the danger of their lives, in those times of persecution, to be an excuse for absenting themselves totally from this great duty of public worship.

Now from the obligation that all men are under to assist at the public worship of God, when it is duly performed, they must have a right to meet together, and perform it, as they ought, without suffering any punishment, molestation, or hindrance whatsoever, from any sovereign, or other person, upon that account. For what God obliges any person to do, no one else can have a right to hinder, or, by any means, deter him from doing. All methods of restraint, or even menaces used to that purpose, would be acts of opposition to the will of God. Every sovereign, indeed, is, by his office, the guardian of the peace and welfare of the nation, over which he presides; for securing which, it is fit that he should have a watchful eye on all numerous assemblies of his subjects, even those which are professedly held for the worship of God; since it is possible, no doubt, that such assemblies may sometimes be made occasions of inciting those, who assist at them, to disturb the peace of the civil state. The forms of public devotion there used, or the instructions and exhortations given on the subject of religion, may have things mixed with them, that may tend to inflame the minds of the worshipers against the person of the sovereign, or against other religionists under his protection, or against the constitution of the civil state. Some of these things have been actually done in such assemblies for divine worship, even by those, who have, at the same time, professed to be, and, really, have been in other respects, of the true religion. An erroneous zeal has put them on proceeding to great disorders and outrages against those Heathens or Jews, or heterodox Christians, whom they deemed to be enemies to themselves and to God, on account of differences in religion. They have not only ridiculed and reviled, but insulted them, and disturbed their devotion; they have pulled down, or burned their temples, or other places of worship [y]; they have even,

[x] Heb. x. 23, 25.

[y] Vid. Divi Ambrosii vitam a Paulino conscriptam.

in some cases, affronted and opposed the civil governors on account of religion.

BUT all outrages or disorders of this kind, and even all things that tend naturally to produce them, may justly be restrained by the civil sovereign, because they are contrary to the ends of civil societies, as well as to the nature of true religion. In order to the safety and welfare of mankind, and to the improvements possible to be made in their present condition, God hath, certainly, designed, and visibly formed them to live together in civil states, which will, generally, protect their persons and properties against violence and rapine, and will give rise to many conveniences and improvements in knowledge, as well as in arts, which could not be had, if men lived in a state of separation from each other, or only in smaller companies together. But as such civil states cannot long subsist, unless all the members of them be quietly submissive, and obedient, in all things lawful to their temporal governors; we may, therefore, with reason infer, that God does not require any thing of men, as a part of their religion, that must, or can, justly, interfere with or hinder their paying such submission or obedience: For that would be to act inconsistently with his own design. Accordingly, right reason discovers nothing of this sort in religion. It only directs us to believe in God, to acknowledge his perfections, to express our hopes of his protection and beneficence, to return our thanks for the benefits he confers upon us, and to yield as full and as constant an obedience, as we are able, to his moral laws. To all which the Christian revelation adds, that we must believe the divine mission and authority of Jesus Christ for the redemption of mankind, and their reconciliation to God; must profess this belief, and worship him before men, in order to convert them to the same religion; must offer our praises and supplications to God in his name, as our only mediator; acknowledge him in that high character of God, which in the Scriptures is ascribed to him, and practice the moral laws with the inforcements he has added to them, and must practice those positive sacramental institutions also, which he hath appointed as means of receiving his grace, and of our spiritual union with him, and with each other. All these things

things may at any time be done, in a public manner, without producing, from the nature of those actions considered in themselves, the least disturbance to civil societies. It must, therefore, be the intention of God, that these societies should not be at all disturbed on account of religion. From whence it follows, that if any person, from a view of promoting what he may think to be the interest of true religion, or of gaining to the professors of it any worldly advantages shall take occasion, from the celebration of public worship, to put them upon any actions that disturb and hurt the civil state, he will not be justified by his really having this intention: For no men, merely on account of their being of the true religion, have, by the appointment or will of God, a right to wealth, to honours or power in a civil state. Those things are not necessary to the right performance of their duty to him, or to their attainment of eternal happiness. They may, on the contrary, sometimes hinder them from attaining or pursuing those great ends, and may, in that case, be very hurtful to them: On which account God does not in the Christian dispensation ever make a general promise to grant these temporal advantages, even to his faithful servants, whom, on the contrary, he often causes to be destitute of them, that their hearts may be the more effectually fixed on a life to come. He doth not, indeed, forbid the professors of the true religion to possess these advantages, when they can, without any unlawful courses, attain them. He approves their possessing them, when they make use of them to promote his service and the good of mankind; and when he foreknows that they will act thus, or when he designs to try them, or has, otherwise, purposes to serve by so doing, his providence may cause things to work together towards their attaining them. But a right to possess them, does not arise from his general or particular grant. It depends on the transactions of men with each other. And, therefore, if any of them use force, or fraud, sedition, corruption, or any such unlawful methods in order to acquire to any professors of the true religion, wealth, honour, or power in the civil state, to its disturbance or disadvantage, and against the will of the sovereign; he hath, in all cases, a right to prevent and punish their attempts. He may endeavour

deavour to prevent them by requiring that every thing, either of a seditious or inflaming nature, shall be left out of the public prayers and preaching. For tho', indeed, those of the true religion must have a right in their public worship to express the articles of their faith, and give reasons for them against opposite religionists, because their doing so may be necessary for the instruction and confirmation of their own people; yet nothing invective, insulting, or abusive against persons of other religions should be mixed with their public worship. If the ancient prophets, who were inspired by God, have, on some occasions, used language of this sort, when he, who knew the hearts and circumstances of men, saw this course to be necessary; yet that seems to be no sufficient precedent for uninspired persons to do the like. The apostle directs Christians *to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear* [y], that is, in a manner as inoffensive as possible. This is more especially the duty of those who are permitted publickly to profess the true religion, when it is different from, and very opposite to, that which obtains among a great majority of the people in that country. And, in order to be secure of their practising this duty, the sovereign may send persons to inform him of what passes in every such worshipping assembly, of which he hath any suspicion; he may oblige them to perform their worship with open doors, and hath a right to punish those, whom he finds to be guilty of any breach of this duty, in proportion to the nature of their offence.

BUT, in case that men of the true religion do nothing more, than meet together to worship God seriously and inoffensively, according to the obligations of this religion, no sovereign can have an authority or right, either to hinder them from so doing, or to punish them on that account; because this conduct on his part, would (as I have said) be assuming an authority to restrain them from doing what God, the fountain of all authority, commands them to do; a supposition plainly absurd. Accordingly, our Saviour's apostles, Peter and John, when forbidden by the Jewish

[y] Pet. iii. 15.

council to preach any more in the name of Jesus, with just freedom said, *Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you, rather than unto God, judge ye* [z]. And the like reply will always be just with regard to publicly worshipping God. To practice this according to the true religion, men cannot but have, at all times, a right; because, as I have shewn, they are under an obligation to do it, whenever they conveniently can, at the times appointed by God himself, or by those persons, whom he has authorized to make such appointment.

MEN may, indeed, lawfully abstain, for a time, from coming to this worship, when they are employed in affairs of necessity, or of great importance to the public weal, or even to that of private persons; for *the sabbath*, says our Saviour, *was made for man, not man for the sabbath* [a]: And again, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice* [b]. He preferred such actions of beneficence towards our neighbours, as were necessary at particular times, to the bare observance of any positive institutions in religion. When the former of these is, of necessity, to be done, the latter must be omitted. Accordingly; if the public safety or advantage, or even those of private persons, do, in any great degree, make it needful that men should abstain, for a time, from God's public worship, we may conclude, that he will then allow it; and, on such occasions, the sovereign may justly command them to do things for the public service, that may be inconsistent with their attending such worship. The marching of armies, or working towards fitting out fleets for the public defence, on days of public worship; or acting in a siege, or battle for repelling enemies, or performing any kind of necessary labour, are things, beyond all question, lawful, when commanded by a sovereign. But wholly, or for a long time at once, to be absent from public worship, when there is not a sufficient reason for it, cannot be lawful, and, therefore, no sovereign can have authority to require it of his subjects.

He cannot justly do it, even tho' this right of public worship may, by the misconduct of some other persons, not engaged in it,

[z] Acts iv. 19.

[a] Mark ii. 27.

[b] Matt. xii. 7.

be made the occasion of disturbances and tumults in the civil state. These may sometimes happen, when turbulent men, incited by their zeal for a false religion publicly received in a country, oppose and hinder the professors of the true one, in their worship, and use violent means for that purpose. Thus the Jews and heathens did, at several times, in the first age of the Gospel, at the preaching of which they themselves raised tumults, and threw the blame of them on the apostles, whom they represented as *men that would turn the world upside down* [c]; but civil disturbances, which, in reality, are not caused nor continued by the fault of worshipers according to the truth, cannot be justly charged upon them, nor give reason sufficient to a sovereign for hindering them from the profession or quiet exercise of their religion. He ought, by fit methods, to restrain the persons, by whose means or incitement those tumults have been raised. But he cannot have a right to prevent such disorders by totally restraining the innocent and inoffensive professors of the true religion from worshipping God in public agreeable to it. For the peace of civil society, tho' it is, indeed, of great importance, is not to be obtained by unlawful means. Now his hindring persons of the true religion, for any long time, from peaceably worshipping God in public, must be unlawful; and, therefore, no sovereign ought ever to do it.

THE chief difficulty on this subject regards those persons, who err, as to points of importance, in religion; and the question is, whether a sovereign be obliged to permit any such erroneous persons to worship God in public, and, by their examples, as well as instructions and exhortations in that worship, to seduce others, and propagate their errors as far as that liberty will afford them opportunities of doing it? The Romanists and other intolerants deny this, and, on the other hand, earnestly contend, that the use of penalties against blameable errors in religion, is not only lawful, but expedient and necessary on the part of a sovereign: For which opinion their arguments have been, chiefly, these:

[c] Acts xvii. 6.

FIRST,

FIRST, that errors in religion, when publickly maintained after proper declarations and admonitions given to the contrary by the Catholic church (which errors are then to be considered as heresies) are, in many cases, sins of a heinous kind against God: For some of them (as those of the Gnostics, the Manicheans, and the like) detract greatly from his honour, the preservation and maintenance of which, ought to be an object of the highest concern to all rational agents. If they be obliged to vindicate the honour of a father or a friend, how much more that of God, who has a much higher and more endearing relation to them, and whose honour is greatly violated by a public profession of doctrines, either blasphemous or plainly false and contrary to divine revelation? And most of these errors must have proceeded from a grievous corruption, which might have been avoided, both in the understandings and in the wills of the persons concerned: And they lead to great defects and misconducts in the practice of religion, and tend greatly to hurt the credit, and to disturb the peace, order, and good government of his church, on which accounts, they must always be the objects of God's indignation. Such worship, therefore, performed by such persons, ought not to be permitted.

IT is further to be considered, that such hereticks are very dangerous to the spiritual welfare of many well-disposed people in common life, who, being unskilful, and generally unguarded, may, by the artful insnaring discourses heard in their public worship, be unavoidably infected with the venom of their heresy; and these wrong notions in religion will, naturally, carry them into ill practice, and be productive of their eternal ruin. Now Beza (p. 96) observes, that it is a greater sin to kill the soul of any person, than his body. On which account, as the guilt of these heretics is the greater, so the case of the seduced is the more to be pitied, and they ought to be guarded with the greater care from such pernicious infection.

INDEED charity requires, that even those heretics themselves ought, if possible, to be reduced to a sound mind; and be thereby saved from eternal destruction, tho' it be by their undergoing some temporal sufferings. But if this their spiritual welfare, thro' their

pride, obstinacy, and other evil dispositions, can but seldom be procured, yet the safety of the civil state ought, at least, to be consulted, which heretics are, in general, likely to disturb by their ambition and love of being at the head of state factions, which are easily formed out of differences of religion. Hardly any remarkable heretic but hath fallen, and will be likely to fall, into a turbulent and seditious conduct [d].

AND, besides this, when they are numerous, and not punished as they ought to be, they tend to draw down God's indignation upon the civil states where they are suffered. On all these accounts, the sovereign, as deriving his authority from God, and representing him on earth [e], must be authorized and obliged to maintain his honour, and provide for the welfare both spiritual and temporal, both public and private, of the people committed to his charge.

THE intolerants observe further, that civil penalties are means not improper to be used for this purpose, because these may, sometimes, by the grace of God, cause heretics themselves to consider, to see and to quit their errors; as St. Austin (see Bayle's Com. p. 86) assures us experience hath often shewn. But even tho' penalties should not have this effect of converting heretics, yet they may be justly inflicted on them, for having, by wilful negligence or passion, corrupted or perverted their own understanding, or, at least they may have a good effect in preventing, by a proper terror, many weak persons from being so easily corrupted by these heretics; who, with that view, ought either to be kept under close confinement, or be driven out of the sovereign's dominions, or, when it is necessary, ought to be punished even with death.

Malignant heresies have, by these means, in many instances, been suppressed and extirpated; by which otherwise not only great numbers of private persons, but even whole nations, would have been over-run and corrupted. Spain hath been by these means se-

[d] Multo minus dubitari potest quin religionis & pietatis cura ad magistratum pertineat, quia, nisi sancte et integre observetur, fieri non potest quin ira Dei, et proinde omni calamitatum generi, respublica objiciatur. *Beza* 24.

[e] εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

cured from the propagation of these heretical doctrines, which, soon after the abdication of Charles Vth, were beginning to take root there. France has, in great measure, extirpated and suppressed the like, after they had much spread themselves, and caused great commotions and much bloodshed in that country. The dominions of the house of Austria, and the kingdom of Poland have, by the same means, cleared themselves in great measure, of these noxious weeds; and so might other countries have done, if due care had been taken. And, therefore, if sovereigns do not imploy these penal methods, when they are in their power, against false religions, they may justly be blamed for not performing their duty. These, say the intolerants, are clearly the dictates of natural reason, supported by known facts.

AND they are further confirmed by divine revelation, which evidently prescribes the civil punishment of such errors in religion, and such ill practices occasioned by them, as are in their nature clearly repugnant to sacred truth, dishonourable to God, and very hurtful to men.

ONE ancient error of this kind, was, that men, (seeing the great benefits derived to them from the heavenly bodies, together with their beauty and the regularity of their courses, and not sufficiently attending to the suggestions of their reason) were led to take them for deities, and paid an idolatrous worship to them. That a stop might be put to this idolatry, greatly injurious to his perfections, God expressly ordered it in the law of Moses to be severely punished, even with death, which, accordingly, was done, in the Jewish state, by Moses, Elijah, Hezekiah, and others: And Job (who, tho' a stranger to the common wealth of Israel, yet had the advantage of divine revelation) declares in like manner that *this idolatry ought to be punished by the judge* [f]. The word *pelili* פלילי, used in the Hebrew for judge, is the same (except in the difference of number) that is used in the 11th verse of that chapter, for the judge in case of adultery, who, in this case, was certainly, to inflict civil punishment, and probably even death, on

[f] Job xxxi. 28.

the criminal; and, therefore, in all appearance, he was to do the same against idolatrous worship. And Job plainly declares, that this offence was to be punished by the magistrate, as a disrespect and affront to the perfections of God; for, he says, that if he had practised this idolatrous worship, he should have denied, that is, he should have failed very greatly in the respect due to God that is above. Now if an author divinely inspired assures us, that the magistrate in that country was authorized, and even obliged by the light of reason, to punish this offence as criminal, tho' it might, in some cases, be founded partly in error, and the prejudice of education, we ought, by a parity of reason, to conclude, that he might, and all other sovereigns both may, and ought to, punish other blameable errors, and practices proceeding from them against true religion.

If there be not much said to this purpose in the Scriptures of the New Testament, the intolerants say, we are not to wonder, because this point had before been sufficiently settled by natural reason, and by the holy Scriptures under the Mosaical dispensation, and because our Saviour did not assume any civil power. Yet he himself, in a remarkable case, when only religion was concerned, did, in order to vindicate the honour of God, make use of some degree of force, against those *who sold sheep and oxen &c.* [g], in one of the outward courts of the temple at Jerusalem, even when their practice was permitted both by the Jewish priests and by the civil governors. And in one of his parables, wherein he seems to have represented his church as it should be in future times, supported by the civil power, (see August. Epist. ad Emerit. 164.) He directs that, if men should not acknowledge the truth of his religion, or would not comply with the gentle invitations made them to come into it, they should be forced so to do. *Compel them to come in*, says he, *that my house may be filled* [h]. He also threatened, that the temporal judgments of God should fall upon the Jewish nation, as punishments for their having rejected him, in like manner, as the evangelical prophet Isaiah had declared, *that*

[g] John ii. 17. [h] Mark xiv. 23.

the nation which would not receive the future Saviour, should perish [i]. And, after his decease, his apostles, tho' not vested with any civil authority, yet used the miraculous heavenly power, of which they were possessed, for inflicting bodily punishments on divers persons, if not for bare errors in religion, yet certainly for offences committed, not against the civil state, but only against the apostles, as ministers of Christ, and governors of his church. At the word of St. Peter, death came upon Ananias and his wife Sapphira [k]; Elymas was struck with blindness by St. Paul, for endeavouring to hinder the conversion of Sergius the proconsul to the faith of the Gospel [l]. And 'tis probable, that the same apostle inflicted bodily penalties upon Hymenæus and Alexander, who had been guilty of blaspheming, *i. e. speaking evil of the Christian faith* [m]. (Bayle Com. Tom. II. 55.) Since our Lord inspired his apostles, who were but private persons in the civil state, to exert such authority of punishing those who were offenders only against the true religion, we may still more justly presume, that he will authorize and even require sovereigns to do the like, by their civil power, in pursuance of the advice of those, who have succeeded to the apostles in the government of his church. And, in fact, this doctrine is laid down by St. Paul, when he represents it to be the duty of every sovereign, as the minister of God [n], to use the sword with which he hath intrusted him for the punishment of evil-doers. (St. Aust. Epist. clxiv ad Emerit. apud Bayle 2d. Com. p. 131. For heresies are, by this same apostle [o], (see Bayle 2d. Com. 337.) represented as works of the flesh, and, therefore, (as Bossuet bishop of Meaux justly argues, 6me Advert. p. 243) they are, by this text, declared to be punishable by the civil sovereign. See Bayle's Com. p. 131, 139—141. *ibid.* 338, 360, &c.

AND accordingly, as soon as the secular powers became Christian, they thought it their duty to enforce the sentences of the church against heretics by temporal penalties. This was done in

[i] Isaiah vi. 12.

[k] Acts v. 10.

[l] Acts xiii. 8, 11. and Beza, 146.

[m] 1 Tim. i. 20.

[n] Rom. xiii. 4.

[o] Gal. v. 19.

many instances, by Constantine the Great and his successors, (see Prynne p. 36, 39.) in the eastern empire. They commanded that the heretics, who denied the Nicene faith, should be driven out of the churches; and sent the chief leaders of them into banishment: And the like course of adding civil penalties, by way of enforcement to the bishop's sentence of excommunication, for heresy, &c. hath been continued ever since, and is to this day, in almost all parts of the Christian church; even among the Protestants, as well as in the communion of the church of Rome.

IN a word, say the intolerants, it is certainly true, that, since the temporal princes have received the Gospel, the far greater number of Christians in every age, both fathers and bishops of the church, and the temporal powers and governors in all nations, even the pretended reformers, Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and Beza, &c. have all agreed in the lawfulness of employing secular punishment against those whom they deemed to be heretics, and have practised accordingly, when they had it in their power.

BEFORE we consider the answers that have been given to these several arguments, it will be proper to form a right state of the question, by observing in what cases, and to what degree, the friends of liberty think that force or restraint may justly be used in matters of religion; and in what cases, and how far an indulgence or toleration, as to public worship, and profession of opinions therein ought to be allowed to persons in error concerning religion. (These points have been formerly much disputed, even amongst Protestants [q], and are not, at present, so well settled among all of them, as things of so much importance to the welfare of mankind might be wished to be.) In order to clear the way towards

[q] See de Meaux Hist. Variat. Tom. II. p. 46, 47. An account of the sentiments of Luther, and Calvin, and others of the first Protestants about the punishment of heretics.

See Bayle's Dictionary English, word ST. AUGUSTIN, p. 566. an account of a Synod of the Walloon churches held at Amsterdam in Augustin 1690, wherein this proposition, "That the magistrate has no right, by virtue of his authority, to suppress idolatry and hinder the progress of heresy," is one of those which that Synod solemnly and unanimously declares false, scandalous, and pernicious, equally destructive of morality and religion, &c.

the truth, the first thing to be observed is, That no person ought to be, with impunity, suffered openly to deny, either that there is a God, or that the world is governed by his providence, or that men will ever be punished by him for the ill actions they have done. For an open denial of any of these great truths must be very detrimental to civil society, the peace and welfare of which must always depend greatly on the influence which these principles have on the minds of the people. Every one, who reflects on the circumstances of mankind, or is acquainted with their history, must be apprized, that, in several cases, great mischiefs may be done, by poison, by fire, and other secret methods, to private persons, and even to princes and states themselves; and yet the persons who do them, may either be concealed from the knowledge of men, or have probable hopes of avoiding punishment from them. Now, in such cases, nothing can have weight enough to deter men from crimes, that may sometimes produce to those, who commit them, great present advantage, but only the fear they have of God, as one who knows all things; hath infinite power, and will, certainly, at some time or other, inflict severe punishments on all wicked persons. That this fear, if once deeply rooted in their minds, will work strongly upon them; Lucretius himself, as much as it was against his Epicurean scheme, makes no difficulty of confessing in the following lines [r];

*Tho' human punishments should be away,
Men under piercing terrors often lay,
Conscious of guilt, they suff'rings for it fear
Worse after death, than any can be here;
And such as endless, to them now appear.*

[r] Quæ tamen etsi absint, at mens sibi conscia recti,
Præmetuens, adhibet stimulos, torretque flagellis:
Nec videt interea qui terminus esse malorum
Possit, nec qui sit malorum denique finis;
Atqui eadem metuit magis hæc ne in morte gravescant.

Lib. iii. ver. 1031.

It

It appears from hence that these were known to be the general sentiments of mankind. And of this, the wisest legislators and philosophers of Greece and Rome were so sensible, that they endeavoured by various means, to make strong and lasting impressions on their people, of hope and fear with respect to the Gods. And what good effects these impressions had, the Roman history remarkably shews in divers instances of persons, who, from the terror of their consciences, and the fear of divine vengeance, discovered the most dangerous and secret conspiracies against the state, and were kept from seditions, mutinies, and rebellions. Dionys. Hal. Livy, and Machiavel [s]. Polybius, for these reasons, thought it was very wrong in those persons of his age, who were for unsettling the Roman people as to their notions of punishments to be inflicted in a future state; because they had, at that time, a very good effect upon the Romans, and the want of them had an exceedingly bad one upon the Greeks. Tully (de Legg. ii.) doubts not to affirm, that opinions about the providence of God, were of very great use, as being what gave the chief force to oaths, made leagues and covenants to be observed, and kept up society among men. In the first book de Nat. Deor. the same author says, that if piety were subverted, justice itself and human society would be destroyed. Plutarch affirms, that the first thing, and of the most importance in the constitution of laws, is to establish the belief of the Gods [t]. And, among the moderns, Machiavel, how little soever he was concerned for religion on its own account, yet, for the sake of civil government, declares, and inculcates his sentiments about keeping up the great principles of it in the minds of the people; “ It will be found, says he, (Disc. on Livy, chap. xi.) by whoever considers the Roman history, how useful a thing religion is to the government of armies, to the uniting of the people, to the keeping men good, and to the deterring them from being bad.”

[s] Vid. Dion. Halicarn. de judicio Publii et Marci Tarquin. Lib. v. Machiav. Disc. on Livy, chap. xii, xiii.

[t] Ἀλλὰ μὲν ἡγε καὶ Κολώτης ἐπαινῇ Νεοτάξεως τὸ νόμον, πρῶτόν ἐστιν ἢ πρὸ Θεῶν δόξα, καὶ μέγιστον, κ. τ. λ. Plutarch adv. Colot.

He, in the same chapter, observes, “ that as strictness in divine
“ worship, and a conscientious regard for oaths, are great helps to the
“ advancement of a state; so the contempt of the former, and the
“ neglect of the latter, are the natural means of its destruction.”
And again, (chap. xii.) he says, “ that those princes and common-
“ wealths, who would keep their governments intire and uncor-
“ rupted, are, above all things, to take care of religion, and its
“ ceremonies, and to preserve them in due veneration. For in
“ the whole world there is not a greater sign of imminent ruin,
“ than when God and his worship are despised.”

UPON the whole, it is very certain that a belief in God, as the
governor of the world, a fear of him, as the certain punisher of
all wicked actions, with hope and trust in him, as the assister and
rewarder of the good, are principles greatly conducive, and, mo-
rally speaking, even necessary to the lasting welfare of civil socie-
ties. For which reason, the governors of them, in order to their
preservation, must not only be authorized, but obliged, to keep up
those principles, as much as possible, in the minds of their sub-
jects: And, accordingly, those persons, who profess to have none
of this belief of themselves, and endeavour to extirpate it from the
hearts of others, may be justly punished for so doing, and re-
strained for the future, by any methods that will be necessary and
probably effectual. They may either be closely imprisoned, or ba-
nished out of the society, and forbidden to return, under penalties
sufficient to prevent their so doing.

AND, from the same principle of a regard to the pub-
lic welfare, a like course may be taken with all those, that hold
any other errors which naturally tend to disturb or hurt the civil
state. Such are they, who maintain, “ that no toleration is to be
“ allowed to, or faith kept with, heretics, but that they are to be,
“ in all ways, molested, oppressed, harrassed, and persecuted, even
“ to death; and that heretical princes themselves may justly be
“ deposed and murdered by their subjects at the command of a so-
“ reign ecclesiastical potentate.” These professed errors naturally
productive of suitable practices, when they are held by great num-
bers of the people, can never consist with the lasting peace and

safety of any country; and, therefore, they, who profess them, and endeavour their propagation, may, justly, either be sent out of the country, or, while they remain in it, may not be permitted to hold any assemblies for their public worship, in which instructions may be given, and endeavours used to spread these principles among the people. One must here add, that there are still some other persons, to whom the same reasoning justly extends: I mean those, who, tho' very different from the former in their sentiments of religion, yet hold errors, concerning it, directly tending to weaken and subvert any civil state. Such are those who maintain that dominion and property are founded only in divine grace, *i. e.* belong only to those persons who are right in their religion, and endued with divine grace. That oaths are unlawful to be taken on any occasion; that all, even defensive, war, and the bearing any magistracy, are things inconsistent with the duty of a Christian. Upon the principle of securing the public welfare, all persons thus erroneous, may be restrained from holding assemblies for their public worship; may be closely confined, or sent out of the country. Their full persuasion of the truth of their notions, if innocently contracted, may, indeed, be an excuse for them in the sight of God; but is not to be regarded by a civil sovereign, because he cannot be assured of the truth of this circumstance; or, if he could, yet their sincerity in their error would not give them a right to hurt the civil state, nor will it justify him for permitting them to do it. With regard, indeed, to persons of this latter class of errors, and even to those of the former, one may justly allow, that if their number be not large in proportion to the other inhabitants of a country, and there be not much danger that they should make many converts to their errors, they may, in that case, be connived at, and tolerated; especially when, in general, they are loyally and soberly disposed, and usefull for carrying on trade and manufactures. But to this toleration, connivance, or liberty, they, strictly speaking, have no right; they may justly be restrained from holding assemblies for public worship, or put under confinement, or sent out of the country, whenever a regard to the public welfare and safety requires this

to be done, in order to prevent too great an increase of these sectaries. Thus far it seems to be evident, that civil penalties or restraints may be justly used against persons erroneous in religion.

BUT here, most of the friends of liberty stop. They do not allow, that the same course may be justly taken in the case of errors which, without being in themselves, or by plain consequence, any way hurtful to the civil state, are only repugnant to sacred truth, made known by reason, or by divine revelation. They think that against persons, by whom errors of this latter kind only are held, no force, or civil punishment can, merely on that account, be justly employed, either in the way of punishment or even of restraint of them from public worship, with an intention to make them embrace the truth in religion.

NOT but these friends of liberty admit, in the first place, That divers errors of such a nature may be very blameable in the sight of God, when they have proceeded from a great corruption in the understanding, and that corruption derived from their ill affections, and passions not resisted and governed as they ought to have been. If any particular writer in our country has too crudely and generally asserted the innocency of error; this never hath been the doctrine of Protestants in general. Chillingworth is express in asserting the contrary, and so is bishop Taylor, and, in this point, all judicious Protestants agree. They readily own, that such errors, as we are now speaking of, tho' not liable to civil punishments or restraints, are yet sinful in the sight of God; and, in case of impenitence, will, in due time, be punished by him.

THE friends of liberty are likewise sensible, that civil punishments and restraints, might, in some cases, be of advantage in preserving well-meaning, but weak, persons from being corrupted by heretics. The cause of heresy, tho' bad at the bottom, yet, in appearance, may often be such, as that several plausible things may be said in its behalf by artful men, who may thereby work upon weak ones. Now this bad effect might, undoubtedly, be in great measure prevented by imposing silence on heretics, as to public worship; by imprisoning them, and hindering all access to them;

by sending them out of a country, and hindering the importation of any books they write.

IN the last place, the friends of liberty are also fully apprized, how very great effects, civil punishments have, in many cases, actually had against the professors of the true religion. They know that the cruel proceedings of the inquisition in Spain, during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, and of Philip the II. were the means of utterly rooting out the Protestant religion from thence, when it was otherwise likely to have taken root, and increased very much. In France, the Protestant religion hath, by the like means, been almost wholly suppressed: Tho' the Papists in that kingdom have not admitted the inquisition into it, nor have, lately, much used the horrible punishment of burning for what they call heresy; which punishment against it, they yet contend to be lawful, nor have, so often as formerly, put lay Protestants to death in any way, yet they have used methods against them nearly as hard to be born; such as military execution, abuses practised to their wives and children; long doleful imprisonments in dungeons or the galleys, &c. And these methods have had too much success against the Protestant religion; so that, in course of time, it is in the utmost danger of being utterly extinguished in that kingdom: As it is also likely to be, by similar methods, in most part of the Austrian dominions, and in divers other countries.

No doubt therefore can be made, but that, in the natural course of things, the like effects that have been produced against the truth in so many places, might be also prevalent against error, if the same methods of restraint and civil punishment were used. For error can never be so well formed in itself as to make a stand against them, as truth, if other things are equal, will be.

But tho' the friends of liberty are sensible of these things; yet most of them maintain, that, against men, who hold errors in religion, not detrimental to the civil state, no civil force or punishment, nor any restraint from public worship, can justly be employed; because arguments of much greater weight against the use of the like methods, &c. in the case of such persons, may be clearly deduced,

deduced, both from natural reason, and from the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

FROM the light of mere reason, they argue thus. The end of instituting civil societies was not, that men might know and practise true religion; for those things depending on themselves only, they could have done them in a state of nature. It was the necessity of being protected in their persons and properties against violence and fraud, that induced them to form those societies, and to grant to the governors of them authority to employ the joint force and wealth of the whole society, or such a part of it as should be needful, in protecting and securing the person and property of each particular member from all injurious treatment. There is no reason to suppose, they intended to grant to their governors any authority to judge for them about matters of religion; for that is a right which no man himself can lawfully give up, or transfer to another; much less is it supposable, that they would grant to their governors an authority to force them, by violence and terror, to act against their judgment and conscience, as to the truth of religion.

ALL that can be with reason supposed, is only that they would grant their governors authority to concern themselves in preserving among the members those capital principles of religion, without which civil society itself cannot long subsist, viz. a belief of God's existence, of his providence over human affairs, and the certainty that he will, some time or other, punish men for their evil actions. More than this, there is no reason to think, that, at the institution of civil society, men designed that their civil governors, who derive all their authority only from their consent, should ever interpose in matters of religion, when not detrimental to the civil state, but should leave the belief, profession, and practice of all such kind of religion, wholly to the liberty of each single member of the society.

THIS argument, most of the friends of religious liberty, think to be in itself sufficiently conclusive in favour of it. Yet, as some persons indeed, have not been so fully satisfied as to that point; that men must be supposed to have had no other view at all in entering

tering into civil society, but merely the securing their persons, properties, and temporal interests; they think that a number of men, as rational agents, conscious of their obligations to God, would have also a view to promote his glory, and the salvation of men, in all proper ways, to which civil society would give opportunity; and that from God, and even from the reason of the thing, the governors of them must be supposed to be vested with authority for this purpose. Now whether this supposition be in some respects to be admitted or not; yet, to prove that it will not ever justify the use of any violence or terror to bring men to the true religion, the friends of liberty, against that notion alledge, that, if God should be supposed to have conferred, by the law of nature, upon civil sovereigns an authority to inflict punishments on any person for errors in religion not hurtful to the civil state, the consequences or effects that must, naturally, follow from the grant of this authority, would be greatly repugnant to his own perfections, and to the happiness of mankind: And therefore this supposition ought not to be made, nor can any sovereign be, by the law of nature, justly vested with this authority.

FOR, in the first place, as there will probably be at all times many more sovereigns of false religions, than of the true one; civil punishments will be much oftner employed against this true religion, than on its behalf: And sovereigns, who think themselves in the right, and authorized by God, when they meet with much opposition from men, will be for the most part disposed, if not at first, yet in length of time, to use rigorous punishments on such occasions, against the professors of the truth; they will inflict heavy fines or confiscations, banishment or death, often preceded or accompanied with torments, by which punishments these persons will be, almost irresistibly, compelled to the profession of known errors, against their consciences, and against the declared will of God. We cannot but be sensible how many persons, such as archbishop Cranmer, Sir John Cheeke, &c. have miserably fallen in this dangerous way: And tho' we may hope that God will have some regard to the weakness of men under such terrible trials, yet we cannot be certain that he will pardon them; for it is undoubtedly

edly a great sin to deny the truth of God, even when it is to save their lives. It implies a distrust of God's providence, and the supports of his grace, &c. And it is directly contrary to our Saviour's command, *that we should confess him before men* [u]; our disobedience to which precept, he plainly threatens, shall be followed with our damnation [w]. *He that will thus save life, shall lose it* [x]. So that the use of such punishments must be of a very dangerous and pernicious tendency.

SECONDLY, when such compulsive punishments are used against error in religion, they will do very little or no good; they, probably, will do a great deal of mischief. For they cannot, in any degree, influence the understanding, so as to make men really see things otherwise, than they do. If, indeed, the chains, that are put upon the body, could restrain the operations of the mind, or the flames, that burn the former, enlighten the latter, there might be some reason for employing fire or force against error in religion. But constant experience shews, that no effect of that kind can ever be produced by them. They will, probably, and generally have a quite contrary one. Men will hardly ever be disposed to see, or think that to be the truth, for not seeing which, as it is maintained by the sovereign, they are so hardly used, and, as they will always conceive, unjustly. They will never think well of any arguments offered by their persecutors for it. They will not attend enough to apprehend the true force of them. Now outwardly to profess any thing, tho' it be really true, which they think in their hearts to be certainly false, will be so far from *pleasing God, who knows the heart* [y], and requires that men should always profess and act agreeably to what passes in it, that they will, by so doing, highly affront and offend him.

THIRDLY, such punishments, when used in any Christian country, will in great measure prevent the unlearned or ignorant part of mankind from having any credible grounds of faith as to the Christian religion. For these men must, (as I have shewn in the first Tract) depend for those evidences, on the probity and veracity

[u] Matt. x. 32. [w] Matt. x. 33. [x] Matt. xvi. 25. [y] Psal. xlv. 21.

of learned men, who must inform them of many circumstances and facts relating to the origin and propagation of this religion, and to the genuineness, safe tradition, and just version of the holy Scriptures, which contain it. These facts, the unlearned, of themselves, cannot know. But how can these unlearned persons depend justly on the testimony and veracity of the learned, when they see these latter to be under the danger or dread of suffering rigorous penalties, if they give any accounts of things, that are at all contrary to the religion that prevails in their country? In that case can there be any sure or reasonable dependence on the probity of such men, that they will give right accounts of things?

THERE will always be ground for suspecting, that, from a fear of suffering, if they should say any thing contrary to the religion of the country, they will misrepresent and give false accounts of antient facts that concern this religion: Of which accounts as unlearned men will know themselves unable to judge, they will apprehend, that they may be imposed upon, and, therefore, will be not inclined to real belief, whatever profession of it they may outwardly make.

FOURTHLY, the use of civil punishments against men erroneous in religion, will, naturally, tend to diminish very much, and often will destroy the proper Christian benevolence, and, by degrees, even common humanity among men. For neither those who are punished, nor those who punish them, or are accessory to it, can well, if at all, preserve these sentiments, one towards another. For can those inquisitors in Spain or Italy, retain any truly Christian benevolence, or even common humanity, towards those, whom, after having kept them for a long time, in many cases, upon mere suspicions, in dismal dungeons, they put, at length, to such exquisite tortures, that they often are near expiring under the insufferable pain? And, if even these tortures cannot prevail upon them to profess against their consciences, they are then, as being incorrigible heretics, delivered over to the secular arm. It is no excuse for this barbarous proceeding, that the inquisitors pretend to intreat the secular powers that the lives of these heretics may not be touched. What is this but hypocrisy, as visible, and

as shocking as the flames, in which these miserable creatures are burnt! Is it possible, that they, who thus slaughter men like themselves, and think withal that they are sending them to eternal torments in hell, can have any compassion or affection towards them? They must, without question, be utterly void of all real pity and benevolence. And so indeed, must they, who, by way of punishing them for heresy, keep men for their whole lives in the most rueful imprisonment, or in the deplorable slavery of the gallies. Can they have any real concern for their spiritual, any more than for their temporal, welfare? It is as plainly impossible to be conceived, as it is to reconcile these practices with the maxims and precepts of the Gospel, concerning the real charity and affection that men are required to bear towards each other. Whosoever, says the Scripture, *doeth not righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother* [z]. It is vain that he pretendeth a love for God, and a concern for his honour. For how can *he who loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, love God, whom he hath not seen* [a]? *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law* [b]. Or how can the poor persons, so unmercifully used, preserve an affection for such unjust and outrageous persecutors? Human nature will hardly allow it. Most plain it, therefore, is, that the use of such rigorous civil punishment for errors in religion, tends to extinguish all charity, and even humanity among men.

FIFTHLY, the use of these punishments will tend to frighten many men from staying in, or even coming into, a country, where they will be subject to them. For men of probity and piety will reasonably think the liberty of inquiring about, and openly professing their religion, and worshiping God according to it, to be things of the utmost importance, as well as the greatest satisfaction to them; and will dread exceedingly the being in a state, in which they must either be restrained from all these, or must practise them at the hazard of their fortunes, their liberties, or their lives. No outward circumstances of a country or a climate can, in any measure, bal-

[z] 1 John iii. 10.

[a] 1 John iv. 20.

[b] Rom. xlii. 10.

lance or compensate for the want of this liberty. For of what value are fine air or fertility of soil, when they are inconsistent with any peace or ease of mind? Or, of what moment are opportunities of gainful commerce, when they must be attended with the final loss of one's soul? In these circumstances, no temporal advantages will engage sober and conscientious men, who make the best citizens, to come into, or stay long in, such a country: So that it will, by degrees, be drained of its people; will lose its manufactures and commerce, and will be so far impoverished and weakened, as to be hardly sufficient for its own defense against foreign enemies: or, at least, its people will grow bigoted and narrow minded; and some of them, perhaps, from being forced to constant hypocrisy, will be apt to grow, in other respects, immoral and wicked. So that such a country is very likely to be weak and wretched in all respects. These are the natural consequences or effects of the use of temporal punishments against real or supposed errors in religion.

BUT can God approve such effects as these, which are plainly contrary to his whole intentions and proceedings, with regard to mankind? He hath graciously endowed them with a knowledge of the difference between moral good and evil, with a liberty of acting according to it, and with a sense of their obligation to use their intellectual powers to that purpose. He has made them able to discover, that, as he is a spirit, absolutely perfect in all respects, he ought to be worshiped *in spirit and in truth* [c]. He, therefore, must certainly expect, that our religion, as it is directed towards him, should be the effect of our free choice; should be a service flowing jointly from our reason and our affection towards him; without both which, it is of no value in his sight, or rather, it is quite displeasing to him: And that with regard to mankind, his children and our brethren, it should be productive of real, universal, and constant benevolence, exerted in all the good offices that are, properly speaking, in our power, especially such as tend to make them truly religious, in order to their being eternally

[c] John iv. 23,

happy.

happy. He further intended, that they should live, and be happy in civil societies, by their due submission to all the regulations in those states, as far as would be consistent with the just performance of their religious duties. Can he, then, ever approve a method, which, instead of a sincere faith, and virtuous practice, will seldom, if ever, produce any thing, but is covered, either with hypocrisy or ignorance, bigotry or superstition? And, instead of promoting fidelity, probity, charity and affection towards each other, will always cause enmities and oppressions, outrages and cruelties to abound among them, will make civil societies weak and wretched, and incapable of answering the principal ends for which they were formed? Most certainly, no considerate man can imagine that a method which is naturally, and even unavoidably productive of such consequences, can be approved, or even allowed by a perfectly wise and good being. We ought, therefore, to conclude that God does not, by the law of nature, authorize, or allow sovereigns to use any rigorous punishments in cases that concern religion only, and do not affect the civil state.

It will be of no moment, in opposition to this reasoning, to allege, That the sovereign, as being God's representative, is concerned to vindicate his honour, by restraining and punishing heresies that are derogatory and repugnant to it, and are so for want of due care, and of a good heart in the heretics. For, in the first place, if God thought fit to vindicate his own honour, by punishing here, on earth, the offenders against it, by forming and professing false opinions in religion, he has infinite knowledge and power so to do; and he has sometimes done it, in the case of public blasphemers against him, or proud invaders of his glory, as of *Sennacherib* [e], of *Herod* [f], and others. In common life, a flash of lightening, a fever, or any other distempers might be employed by him effectually to that purpose. In short, he can do it, whenever he sees fit; and he, certainly, will do it in the life to come. But it may be in many cases most agreeable to the methods of his providence, and of his mercy, to forbear doing it for some time, and to prolong such a person's state of trial, that there may

[e] 2 Kings xix 6.

[f] Acts xii. 23.

be opportunity for his repentance and amendment. In the mean while the sovereign is not concerned to vindicate God's honour against false doctrines, because he being so liable, as he is, to mistakes about points controverted in religion, is not a proper person to do it. It would not be consistent with God's honour, or, in other words, it would not be agreeable to his perfections, to suppose that he requires civil sovereigns to do it: Because they may easily in many cases, do much more harm than good, by attempting it in the way of force, and civil punishment.

THE right way, that sovereigns, as well as all other men, ought to take for shewing their concern to vindicate and promote God's honour, is, themselves to have and profess a true faith, or at least sincerely endeavour to do it; to yield all possible obedience to his laws, and to employ such methods for causing the same things to be done by other men, as will really tend to produce such effects, in ways acceptable to God; and these ways will be, by setting good examples, and taking proper care that their subjects may be frequently and duly instructed in points of faith, and earnestly exhorted to a suitable practice.

If these things be done, there will be no need of using force, even for preventing heretics, from seducing weak persons into their errors; which was another reason alledged for the use of it. For by such instruction, exhortation and examples all well meaning persons, however weak, may be competently secured against the seducement of heretics; if proper care and attention be employed on their own part. Without these no methods can be truly effectual for their benefit: And with these, they may be sufficiently guarded against any ill impressions, even tho' they may sometimes fall into the conversation of heretics. The consideration, therefore, of their safety, is no sufficient reason for doing a thing that, on other accounts, must be improper and unjust.

NOR will sovereigns be justified, in using civil punishments against persons, erroneous in religion, by an apprehension that if these increase much in a civil state, they will draw down the temporal judgments of God upon it. Reason, indeed, makes it highly probable, that God will punish a country for the wickedness of
them.

them that dwell therein [f]; and as the venting and propagating errors of some kinds, in religion, may be justly reckoned a wicked conduct; therefore, God may, no doubt, whenever he thinks fit, punish a nation, wherein such wicked errors are very frequent, with temporal punishments; as he may for their abounding in other crimes. But we cannot from hence justly argue, that the sovereigns of those nations may, barely by their own civil authority, use punishments against those erroneous persons, if their errors be not detrimental to the civil state; because (on account of the other very ill consequences here abovementioned, that will arise from the use of such punishments) sovereigns, in general, are not fit persons to inflict them, and on that account, have not authority to do it. None of them, therefore, can be blameable, if they do it not. It will be a sufficient discharge of their duty, if they only use the proper means in their power, of instruction, exhortation, and their own good examples to prevent or suppress such wicked errors and heresies. If it cannot be done effectually by these means, the rest must be left to the providence of God; and the people must bear the ill consequences of their conduct in this respect. The case of the particular threatnings in the Scriptures, against the Jews for rejecting the Messiah, &c. shall be considered hereafter.

UPON the whole, since we have shewn, that the use of grievous punishments by civil sovereigns against those persons, whose errors, or ill practices in religion, are not detrimental to the civil state, will, and must naturally have consequences or effects, repugnant both to the honour of God, and to the spiritual and temporal welfare of mankind, and are not needful for any good purposes; we may from thence, justly conclude even from the light of natural reason only, that God will not allow the use of them, in such cases, by any sovereign whatsoever.

BUT it may be said, that tho' rigorous punishments may not be allowable, because of their ill effects, yet the same arguments which prove against them, will not be of force against penalties of

[f] Psalm cvii. 34.

a lower nature, *i. e.* against small mulcts in money; the loss of some civil advantages of no great moment, slight marks of dishonour, and other things of a like kind. Tho' these, indeed, may make men somewhat uneasy, and willing to be freed from them, if they well can; yet they never will have weight enough to engage them, with this view, either to profess, or to act, contrary to their consciences in matters of religion. And therefore, no great hurt will ever be done by penalties of such a nature. On the other hand, they may be sometimes of real and great use to the true religion, by putting men upon considering it with due attention. A want of such attention, occasioned by some prejudice, passion, or interest, is commonly the cause why men do not see the truth. If, therefore, they were laid under some inconveniences, from which they could at any time be freed, by duly considering matters of religion, a regard to their own interest and advantage would outweigh and get the better of such ordinary prejudices and passions; would dispose them to give proper attention, and, by that means, would occasion their seeing the truth. Or if some men should stand out against such moderate penalties, yet many others might be influenced by them; and if they should be convinced and brought over to the truth, or should only conform in outward practice to it, their children and dependents, would be afterwards brought up, and sincerely rooted in it: And this would tend to produce an agreement in religion, with an uniformity of worship, among the people in the civil state, which would be a very great benefit to it, by preventing those factions and disturbances which differences in religion often produce. And therefore it may justly be presumed that God will allow such penalties to be laid by any sovereign, on the side of true religion, but of that only, upon all, who refuse to conform to it.

BUT, upon this reasoning, we may observe, first, that the use of such moderate penalties against errors in religion, will hardly ever do any considerable good. For, instead of engaging men to consider things impartially, in order to come at the truth; they will, on the contrary, almost always irritate them against the persons by whom it is offered to them, accompanied by these penalties, and

so,

ſo will, at once, produce a breach of charity, and even great animofity between them, and ſtrongly indifpoſe the ſufferers to regard the arguments alledged for the truth; which, therefore, they will not come to ſee. And very few men, will be induced by them to profeſs, or practice what they think is not right.

IF, indeed, there ſhould be any perſons who are indifferent as to religion, ſome of them may be gained over by a proſpect of avoiding theſe penalties: And tho' they hardly ever will be ſincere, yet their children may, by education under it, be ſincerely fixed on the ſide of truth; which may be an advantage in ſome few caſes. But this poſſible advantage, in ſome caſes, will not be a ſufficient reaſon to juſtify theſe penalties; becauſe conſidered upon the whole, they will always do much more hurt than good. For if it be ſuppoſed that God, by the law of nature, allows them to be uſed by ſovereigns, they will, in courſe, be uſed by all ſovereigns. And as there will always be many more ſovereigns on the ſide of error than of truth; theſe will uſe them in ſupport of what they think to be truth, tho' it really be error. Now the influence of theſe penalties, whatever it is, being ſo much oftner employed on the ſide of error, the ſum of theſe influences on the behalf of the latter, will, in general, be much greater than on the ſide of true religion. So that much more hurt will be done to the cauſe of truth, than there will be good, upon the whole. And there is no real expedience, in any caſe, of ſuch penalties on the ſide of true religion, which will do better if left wholly to itſelf. It may, therefore, juſtly be concluded, that God, who foreſees all the conſequences of things, and has fixed the duty of mankind upon ſuch a bottom, as will be moſt to their advantage upon the whole, will not allow this uſe even of moderate penalties in any caſe, in order to convert men, to the true religion. The conſiderations that have been here offered on the ſide of liberty in religion, are thought, by the friends of it, to be answers ſufficient, to all things of moment, which the Romaniſts, or others, have alledged from natural reaſon, to prove the lawfulness and expediency of uſing force or civil penalties, great or ſmall, againſt errors in religion, that do not
hurt

hurt the civil state. Let us now proceed to consider the arguments which they draw to the same purpose from divine revelation.

THE intolerants argue from the law of Moses: God commanded in that law, that whoever was guilty of the idolatrous worship of *the sun or moon, or any of the hosts of heaven* [g], should be stoned to death: And they suppose, that he ordained this punishment against it, because, tho' it might, in some cases, be founded on erroneous conceptions about the nature of the heavenly bodies, yet those errors must have proceeded from a corruption in mens understandings, that might have been avoided; and being greatly repugnant to the honour of God, and to the duty of men, they were, therefore, highly criminal, and justly to be punished. From this precedent set by God, of punishing idolatry, by the magistrates in the Mosaic law, the intolerants think, they may justly infer, both that God intends this crime of idolatry should be punished by the civil magistrates, in all other nations likewise; and, by a parity of reason, that all other errors in religion, and evil practices, proceeding from them that are owing to a like corruption of the understanding, should, in like manner, be every where punished by the civil magistrate.

BUT to this argument, I answer, that there is no sufficient ground to conclude from this precedent in the Mosaic law, that God intended that even idolatry itself should, in other nations, be punished by the civil magistrate: Because there was, in the case of the Israelites, a reason why idolatry, when committed by them, was to be punished by the civil magistrate, which reason did not hold with regard to any other nations. For the Israelites were under a theocracy, that is, God hath taken upon himself the character and authority of their civil governor; and, therefore, every act of idolatry being an act of high-treason against him, their polity could not have subsisted, unless this crime, (to which that nation was very prone) had been so punished as to prevent its being often committed. Accordingly God ordered the punishment of it to be inflicted by his vicegerent, the civil magistrate. But this

[g] Deut. xvii. 3, 5.

particular form of government, called a theocracy, never had place in any other nation: And, therefore, we cannot, from this precedent of Israel, conclude, that idolatry is, in like manner, to be punished in any other; especially, since there was no declaration made, nor any direction given, in the Mosaic law, nor in any part of divine revelation, to that purpose. The Edomites and Ammonites, who were idolaters, when they were under the dominion of Israel in the reigns of David and Solomon, were not punished, on that account; which shews, that those princes thought the Mosaic law did not require the civil punishment of idolaters in other nations, as it did in that of Israel.

BUT the intolerants say, that their argument from Job is not liable to the answer we here draw from the theocracy of Israel. Job did not live under that form of government, yet he was divinely inspired; and he expressly says, that the worship of the *sun and moon* was an *iniquity to be punished by the judge* [b], i. e. by the civil magistrate; and to be punished, because it was a denial of, or high disrespect to, God's perfections. Now from hence, say the intolerants, we certainly may argue, that since idolatry, as a criminal error in men's understanding, was then, even where there was no theocracy, to be punished by the civil magistrate; there is reason to think, that God intends that both idolatry, and all other such criminal errors in the understanding against true religion, should be, in like manner, punished by the civil magistrate in all other nations and times.

IN answer to which argument, the friends of liberty do admit, that Job did not live under a theocracy, and yet was divinely inspired; so that this text is, indeed, of as much authority, as any other part of the holy Scripture. But they do not admit, that the sense, which the intolerants put upon it, is the true one. For tho', indeed, the English version represents idolatry as what was to be punished by the judge, or civil magistrate, yet there is not in the Hebrew of this passage any word that signifies punishment; that idea is deduced intirely from the word in the original פלילי which does

[b] Job xxxi. 26, 28.

not necessarily imply it: For that it is, in several places of the Bible, used to signify an estimator or judge of the value and nature of a thing, without his being vested with any civil authority. Thus, *their rock is not as our rock, our enemies themselves being judges* [i]. And thou also (says the prophet, to the city of Jerusalem) *that hast judged thy sisters, (viz. Sodom and Samaria) bear thine own shame for the sins that thou hast committed, &c* [k]. In both which texts the words derived from the same root, with that of Job xxxi. 28. have not the sense of any civil judicial authority, but only of judging, by way of estimation, and pronouncing upon the comparison. And in this sense, the interlineary Latin translation of the Hebrew in our Polyglott, in the passage we are considering, says, *etiam hoc iniquitas judicata, si mentitus sum Deo desuper*. The version of the LXX is thus: *Καὶ τὸτό μοι ἀν ἀνομία ἡ μέγιστη λογιθεῖν, ὅτι ἐψάμαλυν ἐναντίον Κυρίου τὰ ὕψιστα*. The Latin vulgate is thus: *Quæ est iniquitas maxima, et negatio contra Deum altissimum*. In the Targum, or Chaldee paraphrase, it is thus: *Est etiam iniquitas maxima, quoniam negarem Deum desuper*.

Now this sense of the word פליל does not imply any thing of punishment; and that this was the real sense of it, we have much more reason to conclude from the authors of these ancient versions, than from our modern translation made in the time of king James I. when the lawfulness of punishments, even capital ones, for great errors in religion, was thought to be indisputable here in England. Now if we allow this sense of the word פליל, there is no ground at all for inferring from this text, the civil punishment of idolatry itself in other nations, any more than there was from the Mosaic law. Now if the civil punishment of idolatry itself, in other nations, besides that of Israel, cannot be proved from this text, or from the Mosaic law, much less can the punishment of all, or any other, errors in religion be proved from thence.

THE intolerants have yet less ground to argue as they do, for the use of civil punishment, against blameable errors in religion, from

[i] Deut. xxxii. 31.

[k] Ezek. xvi. 52.

any thing, either ſaid or done by our Saviour, or his apoſtles, as related in the New Teſtament.

FOR, in the firſt place, the perſonal character of our Saviour, was quite repugnant to any thing of this kind. The ancient propheſies ſpake of him, as one who ſhould not *ſtrive nor cry, nor ſhould his voice be heard in the ſtreets* [m]; as one who ſhould not *break a bruifed reed, nor quench the ſmoking flax*, but ſhould be always *meek and lowly in heart* [n].

AND his conduct was answerable to theſe predictions. He ſpeaks of himſelf as of a ſhepherd, who, according to the general eaſtern cuſtom, would *lead*, not *drive*, his *ſheep* [o]. When many of his diſciples went back *and walked no more with him* [p], he ſaid only with mildneſs to his apoſtles, *Will ye alſo go away?* intimating, that they might do ſo, if they thought fit, without fearing any puniſhment from him in the preſent world. By his parable of the Samaritan, who *had compaſſion* [q] on the wounded Jew, he taught, that no difference of religion, no error in it, ſuppoſed or real, ought to hinder mercy or good offices from being done to men in ſuch errors. When his diſciples requested him to allow them to command fire to come down from Heaven for the deſtruction of men, whom he had declared to be of an erroneous religion, and who, beſides, had affronted him in perſon; our Lord ſaid to his apoſtles, *ye know not what ſpirit ye are of* [r]. *When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatened not; but committed himſelf to God, who judgeth righteouſly* [s].

IN his parable of the *tares in the field among the wheat* [t], he expreſſed his deſire that offenders by errors in religion, as well as in other reſpects, ſhould be left, as far as might be conſiſtent with the peace and ſafety of civil ſocieties, until the harveſt, or the end of the world, and the judgment of God himſelf; eſpecially, when there ſhould be any danger that, by puniſhing offenders here, many innocent perſons might be involved in their puniſhment, and ſuf-

[m] Iſaiah xlii. 2. [n] Matt. xi. 29. [o] John x. 4. [p] John vi. 66, 67.
[q] Luke x. 30, 33. [r] Luke ix. 54, 55. [s] 1 Pet. ii. 23. [t] Matt. xiii. 30.

fer undeservedly; which must often happen in the case of invisible errors in religion.

It is true, indeed, that our Saviour did, in one case, make use of a small degree of force, and inflict, what may be called, a small temporal punishment against the sellers of animals for sacrifices, and *the changers of money in the temple of Jerusalem* [u]. In doing which, his design was to shew, how great a desire he had to secure a proper respect, even to the outward worship of God. For which reason he acted, as by the law of his country, he was, in quality of prophet, in such a case authorized to do against men, of whom some profaned the temple of God, by making it not only a *house of merchandize*, but even a *den of thieves* [x]; and others, who might be, in some respect, less criminal, yet were in a blameable error, at least, and chargeable with undue disrespect to the worship of God. But this conduct in him, who was infallible, and a most perfect discerners of spirits, against men of this character, is no sufficient precedent to warrant fallible persons, even tho' they be magistrates, to use force when the interest of the civil state does not require it, against supposed errors in religion, with regard to which they may easily be mistaken.

NOR can they be justified in so doing by what our Saviour said, in one of his parables, about *compelling men to come into his religion* [y]. From this passage some intolerants have argued, that considering his religion, as it was to be in future times, supported by the civil magistrate, he meant, that they should use force to compel those persons to the profession of the Gospel, who would not be gained by gentle applications, or admonitions. But the whole turn of this parable, and the use of the word *compel* in many other places of the holy Scripture, shew, that this is a very wrong sense put upon the word *compel* in this place. That word is frequently used by the sacred writers to signify only, earnest invitation, strong argument and persuasion, from whence it is highly probable, that it was designed to bear that sense in the passage we are consider-

[u] John ii. 14, 15.

[x] Luke xix. 46.

[y] Luke xiv. 23.

ing [z]. So that no just argument can be drawn from this text for the use of force against errors in religion.

NOR can that consequence be drawn from the threatenings denounced by our Saviour of temporal destruction to the Jews for their rejecting his Gospel. The case of the Jews was different, in this respect, from that of other nations. God had threatened them by his prophets, that they should suffer temporal destruction, if they should reject the Messiah; and, therefore, upon their doing it, there was a necessity that these prophecies should be fulfilled. But there are no such threatenings against any other people, in case they should reject the Messiah, and, therefore, no argument can be drawn from the case of the Jews, to that of any other nation.

NOR does the practice of the apostles of our Saviour afford any just precedent of this kind. For after they had been enlightened by the holy Spirit, they said, that *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God* [a]. They direct that men should be instructed with meekness, *if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth* [b]. They say, that *the servant of the Lord must not strive*, meaning, with any violence, & δὲ μαχεσθαι, *but be gentle towards all men, apt to teach and patient; and that the weapons of their warfare are not carnal* [c]. *The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. They speak, indeed, of contending for the faith which was once delivered to the saints* [d]: But they mean either the suffering for it, which sense the word *ἐπαγωνίζεσθαι* may bear (see bishop Hoadley's sermon on this text) or, at least, such a contention as that of the patriarch Jacob with the angel, which was by weeping and humble supplication, *he had power over the angel and prevailed, he wept and made supplication unto him* [e].

[z] It is observable that the Greek word *βία*, is used in this very sense by Plutarch in the life of Coriolanus, ἀναγκάσει τινι τρόπῳ ἢ διὰ βίας παραινόμενα. p. 225. Rualdi Edit.

[a] Jam. i. 20.

[b] 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

[c] 2 Cor. x. 4.

[d] Jud. 3.

[e] Hosea. xii. 4.

OUR Lord, indeed, thought fit that, in some few particular cases, temporal punishments should be inflicted on certain persons, who were heinous offenders against his religion, that they might be made examples to others, and raise a proper awe and respect towards the apostles, as governors of the church, and under the influence of the holy Spirit. For this purpose (as has been observed above) immediate death was brought at the word of the apostle Peter upon Ananias, and Sapphira his wife, for their deliberate fraud and designed imposition upon the holy Ghost. Blindness fell upon Elymas, according to the threatening of St. Paul [f], for wickedly endeavouring to hinder the conversion of Sergius, the pro-consul, to the faith of the Gospel. And, probably, some bodily distempers were inflicted by the same apostle, upon Hymenæus and Alexander, for blaspheming. Tho' the theocracy then no longer subsisted, yet God thought fit that some particular offences committed against religion only, should be punished with temporal punishments. And this he hath no doubt a right in all cases to do, whenever he is pleased to give the persons, whom he employs as his agents in this way, miraculous powers, as proofs of their divine commission.

BUT the intolerants have no just ground to argue from hence, that either the present clergy, or the civil magistrate have, without such a divine commission, authority to use civil punishments in such cases.

FIRST, because those punishments were then, properly speaking, inflicted by God himself, and not by the apostles, as St. Hierom observes. Perhaps they might do nothing more than foretell them.

SECONDLY, if they had any active part in causing them, yet they were inspired and infallible persons, immediately commissioned by God: And therefore they are not just precedents to civil magistrates, or any other persons who are not so divinely inspired and commissioned, for using punishments of a civil nature in such cases.

[f] Acts xiii. 8.

As to the authority given to civil magiſtrates, to puniſh with *the ſword evil-doers* [g]; and the argument from thence, that *heresies* (being reckoned by St. Paul [h] among other evil actions &c.) may, therefore, be juſtly puniſhed with civil puniſhments; it is, indeed, to be allowed, that the Scriptures do ſpeak of heresies, as being works of the fleſh, &c. repreſenting them to be, for the moſt part, not barely unavoidable, or innocent. Errors in the underſtanding, but faults of the will, occaſioning the corruption in the underſtanding. Indeed, at that time, no heresy, or great errors in the underſtanding, about any of the chief articles of religion, could well be innocent, becauſe they, who had embraced the Goſpel, muſt have known [i] that the apoſtles were divinely inſpired, and might alſo eaſily know what their doctrine was; and, therefore, if they wilfully contradicted and oppoſed it, they muſt have been influenced by ſome bad, immoral motives ſo to do. Diotrephes was plainly ſo influenced. Such men muſt, therefore, have been ſelf-condemned. So that the Scripture might juſtly conſider heresies of this kind as evil-works. But it does not ſay, that thoſe heresies, and, much leſs, that all heresies in general, or all variances from the doctrine of the church, are ſuch evil works as are to be puniſhed by the civil magiſtrate. This inference cannot be juſtly made, unleſs it be ſuppoſed that all evil works, without exception, are to be puniſhed by the civil magiſtrate. But this ſuppoſition would not be warrantable by reaſon, which, as I have ſhewn, directs the magiſtrate to puniſh thoſe evil works only, that are hurtful to the civil ſtate, leaving the reſt to be puniſhed by God. And, therefore, if ſome heresies be not hurtful to the civil ſtate, tho' they may be evil in themſelves, reaſon does not require them to be puniſhed by the civil magiſtrate: And in caſes of this nature, reaſon ought to be conſulted for interpreting and limiting the general expreſſions of the holy Scripture.

As to the general practice in the Chriſtian church from the time of Conſtantine the Great, of adding civil penalties, as imprison-

[g] Rom. xiii. 4. [h] Galat. v. 20. [i] Rom. xvi. 17, 18. *Mark them, who cauſe diviſions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them.*

ment, or banishment, to those of spiritual excommunication; the friends of liberty readily own, that this latter punishment is justly founded, not only upon the command of our Saviour, but even upon the reason of things as being generally useful, and even sometimes necessary to preserve the purity, credit, order, and peace of such a society as the church of Christ. And, therefore, the governors of it, in every age, are authorized to exercise, in a proper way, this method of discipline. They may, if there be reason, suspend and eject any irregular members, or those who believe amiss from the outward communion of the church. But they ought to be very cautious how they excommunicate men of characters, otherwise good; because they differ from themselves in speculative opinions, which are not either mentioned in the Scripture, or not represented as fundamental. Christians should bear with each other in a spirit of charity as to such points. It does not, however, from hence follow, that excommunication may justly be enforced, with any civil penalties added to it. It is plain, that our Saviour did not direct any thing of that kind to be done. He rather intimated the contrary, by saying, that *his kingdom was not of this world* [k]. And his apostles seem to have disclaimed the use of such punishments, by saying, that the weapons of *their warfare were not carnal* [l].

AND as to the practice in later times of the church, of Sovereigns having added civil penalties to spiritual ones, at the request of bishops; the friends of liberty, who do not allow any infallible authority in the church, since the time of the apostles, cannot suffer themselves to be governed, or much swayed by the common practice either of bishops, or of civil Sovereigns, in judging of the lawfulness of employing civil penalties against errors in religion. They think it sufficiently plain, both from reason and the Scripture, that such penalties ought not to be used, with a view to bring men off from any errors, that are not detrimental to the civil state, or to punish them for holding them. Such errors are to be left to the judgment of God: And they are of opinion with one of the ecclesia-

[k] John xviii. 36.

[l] 2 Cor. x. 4.

stical historians, that it is a kind of persecution, to punish in this manner those that are quiet.

Thus I have represented the principal arguments that have been employed against, and for, allowing a toleration, or liberty of publickly worshiping God, to persons erroneous in their religion; and I have done it the more largely, that you may be able to form a right judgment of a question, that hath been so much contested, and is so even at present: However, I beg leave to add, that, before you settle your judgment in this respect, it may be advisable for you to consider how this matter stands in the laws of this realm, of which you are a subject. Some account of these laws, of the times when, and the occasions upon which they were made, will be given in the Vth Traet, which is the last that is concerning ecclesiastical affairs. If indeed, upon this representation, you should find that any parts of these laws are not possibly to be reconciled, with what you judge to be reason and truth, one cannot desire that you should entirely give up your judgment, finally and absolutely to their authority. For, very certain it is, that no laws, merely human, can pretend to be infallible, or exempt from all error. They are, sometimes, the effects of prejudices and passions, that are general in some nations, at particular ages.

YET, as they are for the most part made, especially in free-nations, by persons of rank, and supposed to be endowed with distinguished wisdom and experience in affairs, we ought to presume, unless the contrary should plainly appear, that they have been able, as well as careful, to form the laws agreeably to truth, as well as to the real and permanent interest of the community, which should be at all times founded in truth. Upon this presumption it will always be right, and the duty of each private subject, to be very cautious how he declares, or even determines with himself, against the truth, or reasonableness of any laws that are actually in force in his country. He ought to consider again and again, the truth of the principles upon which he goes, and the justness of the inferences he makes in opposition to these laws, and ought to consult, if he have opportunity, with persons of known abilities and judgment, concerning them.

M

BUT,

BUT if, after all the care he can take, he is as sure as he can well be, in cases of this nature, that those laws are wrong, and have very bad consequences while they continue, he, no doubt, ought to forbear acting under them, and ought to use his endeavours, according to his station, in a legal and quiet way, to obtain their repeal, or the alterations that are necessary in them.

T R A C T III.

On the Liberty as to matters Ecclesiastical, when a Religion is publicly Established.

THE wisest men in all civilized nations have agreed, that, in order to preserve the public welfare and peace, a constant fear of God ought to be kept up in the hearts of the generality of the subjects; and that such a fear of God cannot be sufficiently preserved, without a public worship of him, with some instruction accompanying, and suited to, it about matters of religion. The chief question is, by what means, or in what manner, this public worship and instruction ought to be provided for, and maintained. There are two different methods of doing these things.

ONE is, that it should be provided, by the civil sovereign, in concert with the governors and people of the church, when such a one there be duly qualified for that purpose, consisting of the generality of his subjects, whom he judges proper to be taken under his care and protection, and that, in consequence of his provision, he should have some influence and authority in things ecclesiastical. The ground and extent of this authority will hereafter be considered. At present it may be sufficient to observe, that it should be such only as will be consistent with the liberty that is necessary in matters of religion. Such an authoritative provision, made by a sovereign in the respects abovementioned, is called a public establishment of a religion. The other method of supporting a public worship, is by the common, but private, agreement and contributi-

ons of the people of each sect in religion ; or, when there are several such in a nation, of each congregation of them, to appoint for themselves the places, the times, and other circumstances of their public worship, and to maintain the ministers of it, without any authority or intervention of the sovereign, farther than by his civil power to allow and preserve this liberty to them.

WHICH of these two methods is most for the interest of a civil state, and at the same time most likely to secure and promote a constant and regular practice of true religion, we are now to consider.

THE former of these methods hath been generally practised in all ages, and, if it be well managed on the part of the sovereign, may, no doubt, be effectual for the purposes in view. This will appear by considering the things chiefly requisite in order to a regular public worship. They are, proper places and times for it, a due attendance of the people at it, a form of service plain and solemn, a decent conduct of the clergy who officiate in it, and a security against all insults and disturbances from other religionists. Now as to all these, a proper application of the sovereign's authority may be of great service. For, first, as to the places for public worship, the sovereign being able, at least by purchase or exchange, to obtain any places in his dominions, may accordingly fix upon those places in all the several districts that may be nearest and most convenient for the generality of the people to resort to, without much fatigue, and so may dispose them to come thither more willingly.

HE may farther take care that the buildings in those places, may be sufficiently large and fit for the reception of the people, and their due accommodation in their public worship. And if it be proper that any of those buildings should be of more grandeur than ordinary for the honour of God and of the nation, he can best bear the expence of erecting them. In the Jewish state, we find that God not only allowed, but ordered a most sumptuous and magnificent temple to be built for the whole nation to resort to, and, from thence, to form more exalted and respectful ideas of

him and of his worship, and, at the same time, to remind them that they had all the same spiritual relation to him, and to each other. With the like view, all Christian nations have thought it proper to have one great church in every diocese, as a symbol of the spiritual union of all the Christians belonging to it, and of their obligation to meet all together, if it could be done with convenience, for God's public worship; at least, in the capital city of each nation, there may be a special propriety for one magnificent sacred building. For as the public solemnities of religion are sometimes to be celebrated in the presence of the sovereign, and of the chief persons of the nation, it may be requisite, for the honour of him and of it, that there be a building proper to receive him and them on such occasions, and buildings of this sort cannot be well erected, but at the public expence. And in general the sovereign's authority may be requisite, that the edifices for public worship in all parts of the realm, may be fit for that sacred purpose, and kept in due order and condition for it. Because if they be very meanly built, or suffered to go out of repair, or be not kept in a neat manner, as may sometimes be the case, when a superior authority does not interpose, these ill circumstances will be apt to raise in the people who come into them, mean ideas of the worship of God, which cannot but be followed with ill effects.

THE times for religious worship, when any are acknowledged to have been appointed by divine revelation, ought, no doubt, to be observed accordingly, both by the sovereign and by his people. But besides these fixed and returning times, there may be, on some extraordinary occasions, a necessity of national humiliation for their sins against God, or of their public thanksgiving for eminent mercies received from him; and these may be very properly fixed upon by the sovereign, who will always be the best judge of what concerns the necessities or advantages of the public. There may indeed be some of the subjects who may scruple, or profess to scruple, either the appointment of any such days at all, or his right of appointing them; and, on those accounts, may refuse to conform to the observance of them. And there may be some others, who tho' not moved by scruples, yet may be so much attached to worldly

worldly business or diversions, that they will not be inclined to attend public worship on those days so appointed. Now one must allow, that the sovereign cannot justly or effectually use force or compulsion against either of those kinds of men. For as the former profess to think such occasional days of public worship unlawful to be appointed by the sovereign, he cannot, with reason, force them to act against their consciences. And tho' the latter, indeed, may not at first profess, or have scruples, yet they might pretend such, if the sovereign was to attempt to compel them to public worship, and as he could not know whether these scruples were real or not, he must have a due regard to them. But upon this latter kind of men, the sovereign may, in some degree, have influence by hindering all kinds of worldly business or work, all proceedings at law, and all kinds of public diversions, from being carried on upon those sacred days. This the sovereign may certainly do, and with reason, at any time, when it is really for the public service, if this prohibition of them does not last too long. And when there are none of the things going on, by which worldly minded or pleasurable men would be kept from resorting to the public worship, they may be more easily disposed to attend it.

BUT the most effectual way the sovereign can take to work upon his subjects to this purpose, is by his own example, and those of the chief persons about him. The examples of sovereigns have been, in all ages, found to be of very great influence, as to this point. Livy observes that Tullus Hostilius [m] falling sick grew superstitious, and his subjects degenerated into the same weakness; the people hardly ever failing to imitate their princes in this way. He had indeed, before, observed a remarkable instance of it in Numa, who, by his own personal character and application in this respect, turned the whole Roman nation to an extraordinary regard to matters of religion, and even had the like influence upon some of their neighbours [n]. In the history of the Jews, it is very observable

[m] Tunc adeo fracti simul cum corpore spiritus illi feroces, ut repente omnibus magnis parvisque superstitionibus obnoxius degeret, religionibusque etiam populum impleret. Livy Hist. Lib. I. 23.

[n] Quum ipsi se homines in regis, velut unici exempli, mores formarent, tum finitimi.

servable, that the great body of that people, either went into idolatrous worship, or adhered to the true religion, according as their several kings set them examples.

AND to come down to more modern times, the kings of this our nation, in the ages before the Norman conquest and after it, were in general the chief causes that religion or superstition, attachment or disregard, to the see of Rome, prevailed generally among their people. If therefore a prince, who is in other respects esteemed and beloved by his subjects, is assiduous, and to all appearance in earnest, when he gives them his own example in attending the public worship of God, he will hardly every fail to have a powerful influence to this purpose.

YET farther, as he provides the maintenance for those that preside and officiate in matters of religion, and gives them the rank, dignity, and respect they have in the civil state; he can influence and oblige them to a right discharge of their sacred duty. He may, in great measure, prevent errors from spreading among them. How far he may himself have a right to nominate and appoint clergymen, shall hereafter be considered. But, no doubt, he may employ his authority and countenance with great effect, for promoting among those who, at any time, are already in the church, the virtues suitable to their sacred profession. And by giving preferment and countenance to clergymen of candour, peaceableness and moderation, he may cause those dispositions to increase and grow common among them, as he may likewise promote the growth of all kinds of other virtue and piety, of true knowledge and learning. On the other hand, if they offend in any point of morality or religion, he can, by his influence, suspend them from the performance, or at least from the benefit, of their offices, till they be reformed; or, if that be not done, he may remove, or cause them to be removed from their offices. He must have the power to do this, from his assigning their maintenance: And I will hereafter shew upon what foot he will also have a right to do it.

finitimi etiam populi—in eam verecundiam adducti sunt, ut civitatem, totam in cultum versam Deorum, violare ducerent nefas. Livy Hist. Lib. I. 21.

He

HE cannot, indeed, justly hinder them from officiating as sacred ministers, to any unestablished congregation that will employ them in that character. But he can eject and keep them always out of his establishment, and so may contribute greatly to preserve peace, order, and loyalty in it, and consequently in the civil state.

IN the last place, the sovereign can provide schools and universities, for the education of the national youth with principles and dispositions agreeable to the nature of his establishment, which will contribute greatly to the efficacy and the continuance of it. There can hardly be any insensible of the power and efficacy of education, towards forming and settling lasting impressions in the minds of men. The principles and notions instilled into the minds of young persons, are very apt to remain, and are exceedingly difficult to be altered afterwards. It is therefore very desirable for a sovereign who makes an establishment of religion, to provide places of instruction, where the national youth may be early imbued with principles and ways of thinking, suited to the established religion. This will contribute greatly to the safety and quiet of it.

ONE cannot, indeed, say, that the sovereign hath a right to order, that all the national youth should be educated thus under his public instructors: For some parents may be against this method, as disliking the established religion itself. And if this be the case, the sovereign doth not seem to have a right to take the education of their children from them, and transfer it to others: For God, in the natural order of his providence, seems to have designed that the care of providing for the wants, &c. of their children, during their nonage, should belong to their parents. And if they have a natural right, as well as concern of this work, it may seem very hard, if not unjust, for a sovereign to deprive them of it, and cause their children to be educated in a way which they, their natural guardians, think to be false and wrong.

BUT the sovereign may certainly (and it is greatly his interest, by founding and supporting many places of liberal and learned education) draw and engage as many of his subjects as he is able, to send their children thither for a regular education, &c.

I AM sensible that objections may possibly be made, to some circumstances of the conduct here supposed in the sovereign; and these objections shall hereafter be considered. In the mean time, it is proper to give some account of the other method of private contributions, which is opposed to this, and is now to be compared with it.

THE friends of that method alledge, that, from experience or history, we find that it will always be sufficient, without any civil establishment, to keep up the public worship of God according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For this was done anciently among the primitive Christians; and in later times by the Greek and Armenian churches, in the Turkish and Persian dominions; and by the Papists and the dissenting Protestants, in our own and other countries.

THEY also contend that this latter method is best formed to preserve a full liberty in religion. For the civil power, in this case, has no right to interpose, or at all break in upon them, supposing they neither profess nor do any thing detrimental to the civil state. And as every Christian has a right to exercise his private judgment in all matters of religion, and to act according to it; therefore nothing can be done in their churches or congregations, but by the consent and act of the majority, which is supposed to include that of each individual. They, in this way, can settle the articles of faith that are to be held and taught among them; they can appoint the times and places, and other circumstances of their public worship; they can nominate and constitute the ministers who are to officiate in it; and in case of any mismanagement on their part, or dislike on their own, they can remove them again, as they also can censure, or, if there be need, can eject any member of their congregation who is disorderly or turbulent, without being forced to have recourse to the dilatory and expensive, and often partial proceedings of public spiritual courts. As, therefore, this method is fully sufficient for keeping up constantly the public worship of God, so it is the most effectual way for keeping it up in it's purity, and in a manner most favourable to Christian liberty. Now here it must be allowed that by this method,

thod, a public worship, and a sense of religion, have been kept up among numbers of Christians in all ages, without any public establishment. But in the instances that have been given of it, these two circumstances are to be observed.

FIRST, that the primitive Christians had so very strong convictions of the truth of their religion, that they cheerfully suffered even martyrdom for it: And it therefore was no wonder if, in this disposition, they did all that was necessary to keep up a constant social or public worship, which they knew to be their indispensable duty even in times of persecution.

THE second circumstance is, that the Greeks, the Armenians, and all other Christians in later times, tho' probably they have not so strong a faith in their religion as the primitive Christians, yet have been educated and long habituated to the profession of it; and besides, they all have lived under a public establishment of some other religion different from their own, which hath given them an example of public worship, and an emulation with regard to it, which are motives of great force. The true question therefore is, "whether, supposing there were to be no public
" establishment any where, and if at the same time all religionists
" were to have every where an equal freedom to profess and prac-
" tise all their several religions not detrimental to the civil state,
" would the public worship of God be in that case as well main-
" tained, in all countries, by this way of only private associations,
" regulations, and contributions, as it hath been by civil establish-
" ments for that purpose?" You will judge perhaps better about this question, if you reflect that most, if not all, civilized nations have been, and will be, composed chiefly of two sorts of men. First of those, who live dispersed in country villages; and secondly of those, who dwell more collectedly in towns and cities. With regard to those of the first sort, can it justly be supposed, that if there were no public establishment, the generality of the lower people, who, by their labour, can hardly earn a sufficient subsistence for themselves and their families, would be voluntarily disposed to part with any considerable portion of their gains to support the public worship and the ministers of religion? These

men would not be able to contribute sufficiently; especially when they should happen to differ, as they probably might, among themselves, about their notions of religion; so that, in the same civil district, there might be religionists of various sects. The burthen of supporting the public worship would be too heavy in such cases for such people.

AND would the gentlemen proprietors of lands, be always willing to take it upon themselves? would they be willing to take a share of this burthen proportionable to their larger estates, when they should be under no legal obligation to do it? would all, or the generality of these gentlemen in the several villages of the nation be willing to give up a constant tenth, or even a less part, of the product of their lands to that purpose; especially, when they might differ in their notions of religion, from the greater part of their tenants, and the other lower inhabitants, who might be wrought upon by preachers to their own taste? And, what is more to be considered, would the gentlemen be willing to pay their gratuitous contributions in times and countries, where, by the prevalence of luxury and with bad oeconomy, their estates would often be so much incumbered, that they might not be able themselves to live according to their rank? would they straiten themselves in secular matters to be able to contribute in ecclesiastical? more especially, would they be disposed to do it in times, when irreligion, and an unconcern for things sacred, should prevail generally among people of figure?

It may not be easy to determine this matter from experience; because in almost all times and places there have been civil establishments of religion. However, some facts there are, which may help us to judge about this point. In divers parts of the American plantations belonging to Great Britain, there have been large tracts of inhabited lands, in which, for want of a public establishment for divine worship, many of the people have been, for no small time, without any administration of God's word and sacraments, and seemed to be abandoned to Atheism and Infidelity (see Charter for Prop. Gosp.) "Some, says bishop Drummond, in his sermon before that society—have not had a minister within a hundred

hundred miles of them. Men of fifty years of age have never seen any, nor been at any place of religious worship." Cotten Mather, in his history of North England, "Not one of the towns that are utterly broken up, had any minister in it for a long time. It is horrible to tell what ignorance of Christ they were thereby sunk into. Some young men, twenty years old, had never so much as once heard the name of Christ. Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, cannot but wish that the folly of erecting plantations, without the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ, may be no more committed amongst us." The author of the *Tour thro' Great Britain*, vol. iv. p. 216, 273, says, "That in a large tract in the highlands of Scotland, the parishes are of so great an extent, that most of the inhabitants being destitute of all means of religious knowledge and without any schools to educate their children, are intirely ignorant of the principles of religion."

AND *ibid.* p. 271. That in the isles of Lewis, and Harries, and others belonging to them, there were formerly 24 churches: But in process of time the churches there are become ruinous, and without any ministers at all. And even here in England, when, in the time between 1645 and 1660, the public establishment of religion, tho' not quite subverted, yet, from the encouragement, by Cromwell and his party, to all Sectaries and Enthusiasts, was rendered almost ineffectual, we see what were the consequences, from a petition then presented to parliament in Rushworth's collections.

FROM these instances, and from what may be observed by ourselves of the general disposition of mankind, we may see how unlikely it is, that if the maintenance of the public worship was to depend only on the care and contributions of the farmers and their landlords in the country, without any public establishment that it should be properly kept up there, the people in the country villages would grow irreligious, ignorant, corrupt, and, at length, almost savage.

IN cities and towns, indeed, people are more numerous and more wealthy, have better education, and converse more frequently together. On which accounts, men, who agree in their notions of religion, would be more likely to concert measures together,

and to raise contributions for maintaining public worship, in congregations of their own sect; even if there was no public establishment. And these contributions and attendances on public worship might be generally continued some length of time, especially by those who before had been habituated to public worship under an establishment.

BUT, in process of time, there would probably be great difference of judgments among these contributors, in regard to the constitution and management of the several churches, which would either at first be formed, in great measure, independent of each other, or in time would become so. For when the civil government should not interpose, there would be no sufficient band or mean to preserve any lasting regular connexion or union among them. Discords and contentions would soon arise and increase; as to the doctrines to be taught; the forms of worship to be practised; the discipline to be exercised; and the ministers of religion who should be appointed. Might not those who should think that a sufficient regard was not paid to their judgments, to their dignity, their rank, or their wealth, in such points, grow cool and disgusted? Might they not be apt to withdraw their contributions? Or might not even the mere increase of luxury, and a decay in the spirit of religion, make many of these persons weary of contributing? Might not the public worship, on these and other accounts, come, in several towns, at length, to be interrupted, and in great measure to fail?

It would, very probably, decay or fail in many places, unless the generality of the people should have a great deal of faith and of zeal for their several religions; such as Bede informs us there was among our Saxon ancestors; such as there hath been at some other times, and such as may perhaps be again among us. For indifference as to religion, and warmth of zeal for it, are apt at some times to succeed to each other.

AND, in times of zeal, the officiating ministers of any sects of Christians will generally have a great influence upon each of them. And then, indeed, public worships in the several sects, would be sufficiently maintained.

BUT this effect would probably be attended with other consequences very bad. Such zeal would much heighten the discord, animosity, and opposition, that will naturally and almost always subsist between different sects of religion, when the people of each are firmly attached to and zealous for their several sects: And from hence, different parties and factions would be formed in the civil state. There would be rivalships and fierce contentions for a superiority of temporal power, wealth, and interest. Each of these parties would find proper persons to head them; and, at fit conjunctures, those divisions would produce feuds, commotions, and civil wars. For nothing gives such an acrimony to men's spirits, as differences about religion, when they are on each side fully persuaded of, and zealous for, the truth of them. Among the Heathens indeed, their differences as to their several religions and the worship of their different deities had seldom such effects. For very few of the Heathens appear to have had much concern about the truth of their religion, or any just notions of their Gods. They thought themselves at liberty to worship any, or all deities that came in their way.

BUT Christianity hath put things upon a different foot. It lays a great stress upon true faith as necessary to eternal salvation; and it requires men to *contend earnestly for this faith* [o]. Now these dispositions, in minds not sufficiently tempered with charity and other right sentiments, which will generally be the case of a great part of mankind, will be apt to produce strong contentions, discords, oppositions, &c. especially, when there is a prospect of each party's forming, by the means of its religion, an interest in the civil state superior to the other, and by consequence of obtaining more wealth and power.

THAT these are not mere speculations only, we may plainly see, from the whole history of the Christian world: From the contests, factions, commotions, and even revolutions, attended with much disorder and bloodshed, that were carried on in the eastern empire, about the controversy of the Trinity, between the

[o] Jude 3.

followers of Athanasius, and those of Abius: between those who received the council of Chalcedon, and the Nestorians and Eutychians who opposed it: between those who were for, and those who were against, the use of images in the Christian worship. Upon each of these controversies, there were very great disturbances and commotions, and much blood was at many times shed, not without revolutions, sometimes, in the civil government.

AND the like discords, disturbances, slaughters, and revolutions have been produced in these western parts of the world since the reformation of religion, by the controversies between the Romanists and Protestants: Particularly in Germany, in France, in the Netherlands, and in Ireland, there was much bloodshed and devastation. In Sweden, and in Great Britain indeed, where the Protestants were most numerous and powerful, there was less blood spilt; for the Protestant religion, even when it has had the temporal power on its side, has never been much disposed to imitate the Romish cruelty. But even the Protestant religion has occasioned the depositions of several Popish princes, who have chosen rather to abdicate their thrones, than their religion.

IN such a manner have things gone between Papists and Protestants, when mixed together, and both of them numerous and powerful in the same nations.

AND if between Protestants of different opinions, in the same country, there have not been quite so pernicious discords, yet they, sometimes, have arisen to very great heights, and perhaps, if it had not been for fear of the Papists, they had gone to greater. In the United Provinces, about the beginning of the seventeenth century, the discords between the Gomarists and Arminians in Holland, about the five controverted articles, were near upon breaking out into a civil war [p]. And every one knows what exceedingly bad consequences there were of the differences between the Presbyterians and Episcopalians in Scotland, and afterwards in England during the reigns of Charles I, II. and after the revolution in 1688.

[p] See Bunith's Batav. illust. p. 190. Life of Grotius by Burigny, and the pieces in defence of the States, in Grotius's fourth vol. of his works.

THE like discords, &c. and their ill consequences upon the civil state, were found about two centuries ago in *Æthiopia*, between the Christians of the *Alexandrian* party, and those of the church of *Rome*, when the latter were introduced and supported there, by one or two kings of that country: (see *Geddes*, *Baratti*, &c.) Nor have there been less ill effects produced in *Persia*, between the different sects of *Mohammedans*; of whom one party are attached to *Omar* and *Abubekir*, and the other to *Ali* (see *Hanway's Travels*.)

FROM all this history of what has been, we may fairly conclude what may be, that as human nature will be much the same in all ages and countries, divisions about religion, especially among Christians, when great numbers of them are on each side, will frequently produce violent divisions and disturbances, perhaps civil wars, in the nations where they happen to be.

SOME persons have thought, that these disturbances and other ill effects were owing to the want of care, and of good management and temper, in the several princes and governments in those countries. If an equal and impartial conduct had been held between the several disputing sects, and none of them had been favoured and supported in preference to the others, the broils and quarrels between them could never have risen to so great a height. And consequently the true and most effectual way of preventing any such ill effects to a civil state is, for sovereigns to give no kind of encouragement or preference to any one sect above another, but to protect and favour all alike, whatever their tenets are, when none of them are detrimental to the civil state.

BUT this method is no better than a mere speculation, which supposes that sovereigns and their ministers are, and will always be, different from other men, or that they have no concern for any sort of religion. Whereas this never was, nor ever will be, at least for the generality, the real fact. Sovereigns themselves will often have their likings and attachments, with reason or without, to one sect of religionists rather than another, and will give to those they like, superior favour and advantages. Or if they should be quite neutral, yet, in free countries, their ministers or other principal

principal persons may not. These may, underhand, go against the master's inclinations; or whatever their own dispositions may be, yet ambitious men, such as the prince of Conde and duke of Guise, in France, and the earl of Leicester, &c. in England, will often make use of these religious differences and parties to support them in attaining their ends, of arriving to honour, power, and wealth in the civil state. Now whenever such leading men in a state support and favour any party of religionists, that party will increase. And, in a free nation, civil opposite interests and parties will always endeavour to avail themselves of the different parties of religionists, and accordingly will endeavour to increase and confirm their strength. This was the case with the Protestants in France, with the Gomarists and Arminians in Holland, with the Presbyterians in Scotland and New England, &c. with them, and the Independents here, between the year 1645 and 1660 [q]. It seems therefore to be plain, that no nation, especially no free one, where there are different sects of religionists nearly equal to each other in numbers and strength, can expect to be, for any long time, quiet upon this scheme. There will, by it, be a perpetual seed-plot for factions and commotions.

THE most effectual way to prevent such factions and commotions from being produced by divisions in religion, is to make, or keep up, in proper vigour, a civil establishment of the true religion: Because, by that means, a much greater number of the people will, in length of time, be generally, or always, gained over to it; provided the establishment be well made and managed. For the regularity, solemnity, and constancy of the sacred ministrations, the numbers of the established clergy, with the union preserved among them, the public provision made for their maintenance, with the countenance, favours, and examples of the sove-

[q] Cromwell, indeed, who was a man of great personal abilities, and had a large body of troops attached to his person, might, and did, balance the several religious parties, and kept them tolerably quiet for some time. But even he would have found it impracticable to have done the same much longer. And very soon after his death, the contentions between those parties broke out again, with so much violence as produced the Restoration in 1660.

reign, and other principal persons, will seldom fail of having in some length of time this effect upon the people; who are generally disposed to follow the sentiments and conduct of persons of rank, especially when well exerted in support of the truth in religion.

AND the people, by agreeing in their way of thinking concerning religion, and practising the same public worship, will come to have a mutual affection, attachment, and concern for the interests of each other. We see this effect produced in some degree among all sorts and professions of men.

ON the same account the people will be more heartily attached to their sovereign, whom, for his adherence to what they think the true religion, they will themselves approve and respect; and will also suppose him likely to be favoured by heaven in his undertakings. This attachment and affection towards him, they will be continually taught by the clergy, who, being dependent upon him, will, in general, endeavour to promote loyalty and affection towards him among his subjects [q]; and at the same time will preserve a due respect to the nobility and gentry, (which latter, indeed, is one great end of an establishment) especially in free and trading countries; where it is otherwise apt to sink by degrees, among those, who, getting their wealth by their own industry, are likely to assume a spirit of independence and disregard to their superiors: So that the advantages resulting from an established clergy, are, in all these cases, of very great importance. In countries under absolute government, ecclesiastical establishments may be somewhat less necessary for this purpose, and for that of preventing the growth and ill consequences of parties and factions in religion. But in free governments it will be much more difficult for princes to hinder or put a stop to such disorders arising from combinations of religionists; and, therefore, in such cases, establishments of religion must be more expedient, or even necessary.

[q] The reason why this has been often otherwise in divers Christian countries, hath been that the clergy were then more dependent upon the Pope, than upon their own sovereigns.

Now when a large majority of the people is thus attached to their prince and his nobles, and well affected to each other, by so strong a band as that of the same religion, there will be the less danger of contests or commotions between them, and other religionists, upon that subject: Because those who differ from the established religion, tho' they may not be satisfied with their own condition as to the civil state, yet as being, themselves, much inferior in power, they will not have any prospect of prevailing against it, and, therefore, will acquiesce without making any disturbance, or efforts towards it.

It is true, there have been frequent and great disturbances on account of religion, in some countries where there have been at the same time public establishments of it. But these disturbances have happened, because the establishment has either not been of the true religion, or it has not been well managed. The sovereign has sometimes acted oppressively against the unestablished religionists. Sometimes, on the contrary, he has unduly encouraged and supported them against the established clergy and people. At other times, he has injudiciously favoured the established clergy, and raised a spirit of bigotry, partiality, and persecution among them: He has connived at their neglect of duty, and preferred men of bad or contemptible characters! Sometimes the nobility and gentry have, from a disbelief, or disregard of religion at their hearts, appeared openly to slight and discountenance the practice of it; have not attended at the public worship; have thrown all the contempt they could on the established ministers of it! These and other such circumstances may, indeed, defeat in great measure, the good effects of an established religion. But if there be a reasonable and prudent conduct in the sovereign and his ministry, and, by their influence in the established clergy, it is visible from the nature and general dispositions of mankind, that a public establishment of the true religion must always have a great chance for being successful, in preventing civil disturbances from being made about religion, and in causing and preserving an attachment of the people to their sovereign, and to each other. Whereas on the contrary, if there be only private associations for keeping up the

the public worship of God, these will not, in many cases, be sufficient to do it effectually; and when they do, they will generally tend to breed disunion and animosity, opposition and contests for superiority among the different parties or sects of the people; and they often will not be sufficient to maintain the ground of true religion against its adversaries foreign and domestic, and they will inspire a disaffection, or coolness, at least, in numbers of the people towards their sovereign, who differs from them in religion; so that, upon the whole, it seems to be clear, that the making and maintaining an establishment of the true religion in a proper manner, is much for the good order, peace, and welfare of civil society; and from thence, the conclusion drawn by the friends of such establishments, is, "That the sovereign has always a right, " and whenever he can, morally speaking, is under an obligation, " to make and maintain such an establishment."

BUT against the lawfulness of making such an establishment by a sovereign, it hath been objected,

FIRST, that, in consequence of making such establishments, false religions will always be established in many more countries, than the true one; because every sovereign will establish that religion which he judges to be the true one: And there will always be many more sovereigns in error, than of the true religion, and, therefore, many more false religions will be established than true [r]: And as the natural tendency of establishments is to promote and spread the established religions, much more among the people than they would otherwise be; this consequence God cannot be supposed to approve, and therefore cannot approve the making any establishments.

Now in answering this objection, we must, indeed, acknowledge it to be probable, that, in the present state of mankind, the much greater number of sovereigns will always be, as, by their own fault, they have always been, erroneous as to religion. And that if they be allowed to make establishments, each will

[r] See Bp. Hoadley's Answ. to Convoc. p. 128, 146, and p. 150, 167, and 131, 135: And Rights of Subjects, &c. 259, 273.

make one of his own religion, from whence the consequence will be, that establishments of erroneous religions will be much the more numerous.

BUT from hence it is no just consequence that God will not allow any establishment of the true religion to be made. For when such a one is duly made, and accompanied with a full toleration, or indulgence of all other religions, not detrimental to the civil state, such an establishment will naturally do a great deal of good; and will not (except by the fault of the persons concerned) do any hurt, or at least such a one will do much more good than hurt. It is therefore very suitable to the divine perfections, to allow establishments, when thus made; though in other cases, establishments of a different kind may do hurt by the fault of men. The abuse which some or many men may make, by their own fault, of a thing, in itself lawful, expedient, and even, morally speaking, necessary for the public good, ought not to hinder other men from the benefit of it, who will use it aright. For instance, tho' the liberty which all sovereigns have of making war upon just occasions, is, by many of them frequently used very ill, yet this abuse on their part, does not hinder but that God may allow this liberty to those who will and do use it well. In like manner, tho' many or most parents will, and do, in fact, instruct their children very wrongly about matters of religion; yet we are not from thence to conclude, that God does not allow to every parent a liberty of instructing them rightly. On the contrary, he makes it their duty so to do; because their doing it is necessary for the welfare of the children, who would otherwise be, in many cases, quite uninstructed, to their own very great disadvantage, and that of the public. In like manner, the making a civil establishment of religion being naturally productive of very good effects to mankind, if rightly made, there is reason to think that God will approve it, when so made, tho' not when otherwise.

THE second objection is, that even when the true religion is established, yet the annexing of civil advantages to the profession of it, will naturally cause many persons to profess it, merely, or chiefly with a view to these civil advantages. Now such a pro-
fession

feſſion is in no degree acceptable to God, but, on the contrary, greatly diſpleaſing to him: And in particular, is contrary to the genius of the Chriſtian religion, the ſanctions of which were deſigned to be not of this world; therefore we cannot ſuppoſe that God approves any ſuch eſtabliſhment.

To this objection our answer is, that the civil advantages, annexed to the profeſſion of the true religion, ought not to be deſigned, nor are they by good ſovereigns deſigned, to tempt or engage men to a profeſſion of it againſt their conſciences, or even at all to leſſen their regard to God, to the reaſon of things, or to the ſpiritual [s] ſanctions of his laws. On the contrary, good ſovereigns will always deſign that men ſhould be no further influenced by the proſpect of thoſe civil advantages than they ought to be. The good ſovereign's deſign is only, that men of all ſides ſhould be eaſy, and fully at liberty to profeſs and practice whatever religion they judge to be true, provided it be not detrimental to the civil ſtate; and at the ſame time to ſecure, as much as he well can, the peace and welfare of it. He does not deſire that any man ſhould be at all influenced by a view to thoſe civil advantages: If any be ſo, the fault is only in himſelf.

You will ſay, perhaps, that men ought not to lay temptations, or *put ſtumbling-blocks in the way of their brethren* [t], even tho' it be the fault of theſe latter only that they fall over them. (See biſhop Hoadley's Rights of Subjects, p. 259, &c.) Now this indeed, is true, when there is no moral neceſſity or great advantage from doing the things, which, in event, prove to be ſtumbling blocks, or occaſions of falling to other men. For, in that caſe, a charitable regard to others ought to prevent us from doing ſuch

[s] In any country where there is a free toleration, ſo that every man is allowed to believe and practice what ever he judges fit, in all matters of religion, there can be no ground to affirm that the legiſlative authority of Jeſus Chriſt is at all invaded, or the ſpiritual ſanctions of his laws impeached. If men, in ſuch a caſe, have not the regard to them they ought to have, the fault is only their own; neither the public eſtabliſhment nor the ſovereign who makes it, are at all to be blamed.

[t] Rom. xiv. 13.

things.

things. But when the doing them is highly expedient or necessary for the public service, or for that of [u] many other Christians, or even for our own just and important private advantage; and needs not, unless by their fault, be at all hurtful to any, it then, certainly, is justifiable to do such things. And this plainly is the case of civil establishments of religion.

A THIRD objection against the lawfulness of making a public establishment of religion, is raised from the nature and primitive constitution of the Christian church, and of the spiritual liberty and privileges, with which our Saviour endowed it. Tho' he did not intend, say these objectors, to deprive the governors of civil societies, of any part of the authority to which they were intitled in virtue of that character, yet he plainly designed, that they should not interpose in any merely spiritual affairs of his religion. In these indeed, as far as they were not detrimental to the civil state, they had no right by the law of reason, to interpose; on the contrary, they were obliged to tolerate all such inoffensive notions and practices, and to leave them to the consciences of the parties concerned. Now the distinguishing institutions of the Christian religion were all of this kind. Our Lord rightfully might oblige his disciples to profess their faith in him, openly, as there should be occasion: "To meet together at certain times for his public worship, with the use of the two sacraments of baptism, and the eucharist. He might set apart certain persons, who, consistently with their obligations to the civil state, might be to preach the Gospel, to administer the sacraments, govern the church, after his decease, and commission others, after them, to act for these same purposes."

OUR Lord, and his apostles inspired by him, might further oblige all his followers, to pay a due respect and obedience to these church governors, in things spiritual, "To provide a fit and con-

[u] The primitive Christians made frequent contributions of money, for the benefit of their poorer brethren; which tempted and engaged some bad men, as Peregrinus the philosopher (see Lucian de ejus Morte) to profess and pretend to be Christians, that they might partake of those contributions. Did this circumstance make it wrong in the Christians to contribute for this purpose? Certainly not.

stant maintenance for them, and to raise money among themselves, by voluntary contributions, in order to defray all the expences incident to public worship, and for works of charity necessary towards their poor brethren." All these things we accordingly find him in the Scriptures to have actually done, without any regard to the sovereign, or other civil governor under whom he lived; and in pursuance of his example, institution, and command, all these things continued to be done thro' the first three ages of the church; during most of which time the Roman emperors, who were its civil sovereigns, harrassed it with almost continual persecutions. If those sovereigns had then been vested with an authority of appointing and settling the articles of the Christian faith, or even of appointing the times, the places, and modes of public worship, but especially if they had been vested with an authority of chusing the bishops and other spiritual officers of the church; they would either have appointed none of these, or else such persons as should have endeavoured to corrupt, suppress, and put an end to this religion. And these same effects any other sovereign, in any other age, must have it in his power to produce, if he, in virtue of his civil office, were intitled to all these authorities abovementioned in the Christian church. Which consideration shews, with what reason and wisdom our Saviour, to the end that his church might perpetually subsist, lodged all these branches of ecclesiastical authority in its spiritual governors and clergy, or if not all in them solely, yet at least conjointly with the laity of it. He did not, indeed, exclude civil sovereigns as such, any more than any other men, from entering into his church, and continuing members of it. On the contrary he obliged them as well as all other men, who should have opportunities to become, and remain always members of it, in order to their having the benefit of that salvation, which his sufferings and death had purchased for mankind. But when civil sovereigns were to embrace this religion, they were not, by so doing, in course, intitled to any ecclesiastical authority in it. For tho' they retained all their civil authority, and, in respect to it, the governors of the church were to continue as much subject to them as they were before; yet as members

members of the church, sovereigns were to be considered as void of any spiritual authority, and were obliged to submit to the settled regulations and practices of the church, not hurtful to the civil state, without interposing, in an authoritative way, to censure or alter them, without the consent express, or supposed, of the church and its governors. As this, say the objectors, was the primitive constitution of the Christian church, for very wise reasons made by our Saviour, and was in all appearance designed to be perpetually continued, there is, from thence, ground sufficient to think he did not intend, that any civil establishment of his religion should ever be made. Because, by these establishments, sovereigns would, of course, interpose more than would be right in the affairs of the church, would have an undue influence in the settlement of articles of faith, would get into their hands the appointment of church-officers, would corrupt and hinder the exercise of its discipline, and so would have it in their power to alter, and even put an end to its primitive and free constitution, and defeat the purposes for which it was designed. There is no room to suppose, that our Saviour would approve these consequences; and therefore we ought not to suppose, that he will approve or allow the making a civil establishment of his religion.

IN replying to this objection, we must admit, that some of the particulars alledged in it are true. Our Saviour himself did, without having been directed by, or consulting any civil sovereign, declare all the chief articles of faith, and of practice, with the modes of worship in his religion. He himself chose and appointed the chief ministers of it, and gave them authority to appoint others. He mentioned the discipline that he designed should be exercised; and he declared, that his ministers ought to be maintained, and duly respected by his followers.

FARTHER; divine providence ordered things in such a way, that for the first three centuries, the church not only continued in spiritual matters, quite independent on any civil sovereign, but was for most part of the time persecuted by them; a course which seems to have been taken for this reason, among others, "That the essential difference and distinction between the Christian church

church and the civil state, might be more plainly visible, and a precedent might be given for the subsistence of the former, independently of the latter, whenever there should be a necessity for it.

BUT from this course which was at first taken by our blessed Saviour, we cannot justly conclude, that he will never allow any civil establishments to be made of his religion. On the contrary, even from the different constitutions and circumstances of these two societies, there is a great probability, that he designed civil establishments should be made of it. Because, when the Christian religion should be so far propagated in the world, that the whole, or far the greater part, of many civil societies would come to profess this religion, it would be very difficult, without a public establishment, to keep the ecclesiastical and civil governments of any nation in due harmony and peace with each other. This might, indeed, as far as the nature of the things is concerned, be very well done [w], if the governors on each side would always make a right use of their authority, and keep it in its proper bounds, without any usurpation of the one upon the other; but, as the dispositions of men will often be, this cannot be expected to be at all times done on either side; one or the other side will often be for enterprising and encroaching beyond its just bounds; which, if it were to be done by the governors of the civil society, they would sometimes acquire an authority destructive, or at least very corruptive, of the true religion in their dominions. On the other hand, if the governors of the religious society were to encroach and usurp greatly upon the civil, their doing so would not only tend very much to disturb and weaken the civil society, but even to corrupt and greatly hurt the true interests of the Christian religion itself. And, therefore, to prevent these ill consequences, and the broils and disturbances that would almost perpetually be happening between them, the best course is, "That the religious society should accept of, and submit to, an establishment made of it by the civil sovereign, who thereby will be intitled, as hath been shewn, to the authority necessary to keep

[w] See Rights of the Christian Church, p. 34, 35.

things upon a right bottom, to preserve the quiet, and act for the real interest of both the societies." Thus we may argue, from the constitution and true interest of both the church and the state, for the civil establishment of the former by the latter.

NOR is there any argument to be drawn from the holy Scriptures, against such a civil establishment of the true religion. The ancient prophets of the Jewish dispensation, rather intimate that, in process of time, *kings should become nursing fathers*, to the future Christian church, and *queens its nursing mothers* [x].

AND in the constitution of the Christian church, or any part of it, every thing may be rendered consistent with such establishments. For tho' indeed the Christian religion was designed to be chiefly subservient to mens attainment of eternal happiness, yet as far as it may conduce also to promote their temporal interest, without any hindrance to the former, there is just ground to think that God intended it should be so, and that all disputes and contests between the ecclesiastical and civil societies, which are apt to arise from the weakness, or malignity, or ambition of men, should be, as much as possible, avoided.

Now to these ends it is very expedient, as hath been here shewn, "That civil sovereigns, when Christians, and, as such, likely to be in reality concerned that this religion should obtain its proper effect, should take upon them to settle, maintain, and defend the church, which they judge to be the true one, in the profession and practice of this religion, agreeably to right and good order, from any force that might be employed against it. And to secure a constant and fit maintenance for the officers and ministers of it, this conduct must be much to its advantage upon the whole." And, therefore, the governors and people of such the true church may justly consent to its taking place; and also to the sovereign's having some such concern and agency in matters ecclesiastical in consequence of it, as will not really be hurtful to the real interest of religion. From this consent of the church, the sovereign may derive an authority and right to do several things, relating to the polity

[x] Isaiah xlix. 23. See Vitringa in loc.

of the church, which right he would not have had merely from his character of civil sovereign. In particular,

FIRST, the church may very justly consent, that he shall give his civil sanction to such articles of faith, as she, *i. e.* the generality of her members, professedly judge to be agreeable to the holy Scriptures, or true in themselves.

HIS giving this sanction to them is no invasion of the legislative authority of Christ, which remains intirely as it was: For the clergy and people, are not, by this establishment, forced or obliged to believe or profess these articles, any more than they were before; they are only intitled to some new civil advantages by so doing, which advantages they are at liberty, at any time, to give up, and to declare their disbelief of any of the said articles, if they should see reason so to do. This liberty they ought always to reserve to themselves, and to their children, and they ought to be understood and supposed so to do.

ON the other hand, the sovereign, if, after he has established any such articles, he finds reason to think them false, is equally at liberty, and obliged to discard such articles out of his establishment, and to introduce into it such other articles as he judges to be true and expedient, or necessary to be made parts of it. But a wise sovereign will be very cautious, how he multiplies the number of such articles of faith; because, such will always tend to raise and promote differences of opinion, discords and contentions among his subjects, which differences it is one great design of an establishment to prevent. It will, therefore, be true wisdom in a sovereign, to establish as few articles of faith as well may be, to be publicly professed by the people, or even by the clergy; and those essentially necessary, and evidently true ones. There may, indeed, be circumstances of the church and the state, that may oblige or induce a sovereign, to establish considerable numbers of articles of faith: For instance; when a false and corrupt religion, that hath long obtained in the nation, is to be abolished; in that case, a good number of negative declarations against it may be requisite, especially on the part of the established clergy: But in general, when a sovereign can well do it, the most prudent course is, to

establish only the principal and necessary articles of religious faith, and to make the forms of public profession and worship, in consequence of them, be as general and comprehensive as possible; and expressed, as nearly as may be, in the very terms of the holy Scriptures.

WHEN this is done, if any persons concerned to do it refuse to profess these articles, he may justly deprive them of the benefits of his establishment; I mean, that he hath a right so to do, with regard to men; for as far as they are concerned, he has a full right to judge for himself, of the truth of any articles of faith, and to give or refuse an establishment to them; they have no right to force or oblige him to establish any, but what he judges to be true. But it is also to be observed, that if he judges wrongly, and gives an establishment to a false religion, he will be blameable for so doing in the sight of God. For the giving an establishment to a false religion, tends to promote and spread it much more than it would otherwise be among the people, which is a thing evil in itself, and must certainly be displeasing to God; and therefore no sovereign can have a right, properly speaking, to do it, even tho' his doing it may be an advantage to the civil state: For St. Paul has declared, that we must *not do evil, that good may come* [y]. A sovereign can only be justified before God, when he establishes the true religion. But with regard to men, his establishment, even when it is of a false religion, ought so far to take place, as that they can have no right to force or oblige him to alter it, or to establish what they think to be the true one, or even what really is so; yet when there is an establishment of what they judge to be a false religion, they still have a full right to be allowed a liberty of professing and acting according to that religion which they judge to be true, provided it be not detrimental to the civil state: And they may even form separate churches to this purpose; the lawfulness of which conduct will depend upon their judging rightly as to the articles of faith in question, or upon their being sincere in their error. Thus much as to the sovereigns establishing articles of faith.

[y] Rom. iii. 8.

As

As to his injoyning ceremonies, or modes and times of public worship, he is, with regard to these, intitled to somewhat more authority, and the people and clergy are somewhat less at liberty; provided, that the ceremonies and rites he enjoyns, be either of some good tendency in religion, or, at least, be of no ill one, *i. e.* be indifferent in their own nature. In that case, if he judges them to be useful, either to religion or to the civil state, he may reasonably injoin them, and the members of the church established cannot reasonably refuse to comply with them; for in the regulation of things when acknowledged by them to be indifferent, his judgment and authority ought to take place, to a proper degree, in matters as well religious as civil. It would be wrong, indeed, in him to multiply ceremonial practices too much; for this might tend to the undue amusement or dissipation of the thoughts of the worshipers; and would be unsuitable to the genius of the Christian religion, which lays the chief stress upon worshiping God *in spirit and in truth* [z]. If the ceremonies be hurtful to these, the clergy and people, or any part of them, will have a right to decline joining in such established worship. But if the ceremonial practices enjoined by the sovereign, be but few, and not improper; in that case, as there must be some regulation of ceremonial and indifferent matters, it is fit, under an establishment, that they should be determined by the sovereign, at least after consultation with the ecclesiastical governors.

AND when they have been so settled, it becomes the duty of all members of the church, whose conscience will allow them, to conform to them. It will not in that case be a sufficient excuse for nonconformity, to allege that they are incroachments, or usurpations upon their Christian liberty; for this liberty ought to give way, in such cases, to the judgment of the sovereign, with regard to the expediency of such regulations. If, indeed, any members of the church really judge that those regulations are inexpedient in so high a degree, that they will be hurtful to true piety, they ought not then to conform to them; but it would be wrong in

[z] John iv. 23.

any person designedly to raise and cherish scruples in himself, or in others, on such accounts; he ought on the contrary to endeavour to quiet and satisfy them. For a respect to civil authority, and a charitable regard to the peace and spiritual welfare of other men, are of much more value in the sight of God, than a scrupulous attention to guard against impositions upon religious liberty, when nothing unlawful, or inconsistent with true piety, is imposed.

BUT then it is also true, on the other hand, that it is better for a sovereign to forbear making any such impositions of ceremonies or ritual practices, as much as he well can; for tho' his subjects ought to comply with them, as far as in conscience they can, yet it may happen that great numbers may not be able to reconcile their consciences to them; and they will be obliged on that account to separate from the public worship, which separation may occasion factions dangerous or inconvenient to the civil state; and even only in a religious view, a wise and good sovereign will be backward to impose such unnecessary things, where it is fully in his power to forbear doing it, or to let them drop that have been formerly imposed. This latter, indeed, may not always be expedient; because, when such ceremonial practices have been long used in a nation, and the generality of the people have, by custom, been attached to them, many might be uneasy if they should be laid aside; and, in that case, a wise sovereign will continue things as they are: But if there ever be a juncture, when such things can be omitted without any ill consequence, a wise sovereign will always endeavour to reduce the external worship of God to a proper noble simplicity, which will be the way to avoid exceptions and discontents about these matters, and contribute greatly to an union and harmony among his subjects.

THE sovereign may, farther, receive from the church an authority and right of nominating and appointing her spiritual governors and others of the clergy. The sovereign hath not this right merely in virtue of his temporal character. Grotius certainly was wrong in ascribing, as he does (*Imp. Sacr.* 265. See *Præf. de habitu*, p. 133.) this authority to all sovereigns, even Infidel ones. Our Saviour plainly did not allow it to the Roman sovereigns, in
his

his own time; nor seems to have designed that their successors, or any other sovereigns, should have it merely in virtue of that character; for that circumstance would have put it into their power, at any time, to have suppressed, or at least very much to have hurt his religion. He, or his apostles in his name, prescribed another method for the appointment and ordination of the ecclesiastical ministry; viz. by the imposition of the hands, first of the apostles, and afterwards by those of the persons ordained by them and their successors, *i. e.* by the bishops for the time being, with the consent and testimony of the people in each church. This hath been the sense and practice of the church all along; and in the primitive church, no bishop or other clergyman whose sacred character was derived from the sovereign only, would ever have been acknowledged by the church or people, to have been vested with such a spiritual authority and character.

BUT tho' the sovereign cannot, merely as such, have this right, either of nominating or appointing spiritual ministers, yet he may have it from the consent of the Christian church and its governors, in the particular nation of which he is sovereign, or of that part of the nation, at least, which accepts and acts under his establishment; I mean, he may have it, not perpetually, absolutely, or irrevocably; for then some sovereigns might use it to the corruption or destruction of that part of the church; but he may have it for as long a time as he uses it well. No Christians of any age can lawfully give this consent, so as to bind their posterity; even they themselves must be at liberty to retract it, on any just and pressing occasion. Now the sovereigns having it upon these terms may be for the real benefit of the church, as well as of the state; because, the sovereign may nominate and appoint as proper clergymen as the church governors could do, and more proper, in all appearance, than the people would do. It is, indeed, the sovereign's interest so to do; because such clergymen would be most likely to act well for the service both of the church and of the state; at the same time, that their obligation to the sovereign will attach them as much as may be to his interest. Now this authority in the sovereign being really expedient, both for the church

church and for the state, therefore the governors and people of the church may properly consent to it, upon the condition abovementioned; and it is justly presumable that it is not disagreeable to the ordinance of Christ. The consent of the church and people may sufficiently appear, either from express laws, or other public transactions, or from a long uncontradicted custom, and from the actual adherence of the majority to it.

THE sovereign may also have, upon the same foot of the church's consent, an authority to take care that the established clergy perform their duty well, according to the rules of the holy Scripture, and to the terms of his establishment. He had, indeed, merely as civil sovereign, without making any establishment of religion, a right to take care that no part of the conduct of any ministers of religion should be injurious to the civil state, while as to matters merely of their religion, he had no right of interposing; but, as he is the head of the establishment, he has a right to know whether the bishops and clergy be, in his judgment, orthodox in their doctrine, regular in their sacred ministrations, and pious in their examples. Because, if they be not so, they do not answer the design of his establishment; and if they be notoriously faulty in any of these respects, he may have a right to deprive them, by the intervention of ecclesiastical authority, or even without it, where their maintenance depends wholly upon his establishment. This right in the sovereign, as long as it is well used, must be supposed to have been consented to by the ecclesiastical governors and people.

THE established sovereign may, upon the same principle, have a right to appoint and license all assemblies of the clergy, designed to make canons and constitutions for the government of the church; indeed, merely as civil sovereign he had a right to consent to the assemblies of the clergy for this purpose; for tho', without his leave, any religionists, not detrimental to the civil state, had a right to assemble for the public worship of God, it is not so clear that they have a right to assemble in order to make canons, &c. because the making them can seldom, if ever, be necessary to the essential purposes of religion.

BUT

BUT even tho' a sovereign, as such, had not a right to assent to assemblies, merely for making canons, he has, certainly, that right when he gives an establishment; and withall, has a right of judging what canons may be consistent with, and useful in his establishment, and of rejecting those which are not so; and giving a civil sanction to those only, which he approves. Because, otherwise, canons would, or might, be made, that would obstruct or defeat the ends of his establishment.

HE may, in like manner, be authorised to have an inspection and control upon the jurisdiction of the church, even that which results from her constitution as a spiritual society; for tho' this authority was given to the church by our Lord, it is not necessary that she should, nor is she obliged, always to exert it: This hath been allowed by St. Austin and others. She may, therefore, forbear to exercise it for reasons of convenience to herself and the public; when she does exercise it, she ought always to do it with clear equity, and prudence, and impartiality. And the sovereign, who makes the establishment, has a right to judge whether she does so or not; to redress any irregular proceedings; to prevent their causing any disturbance to the state; or oppression, or unjust damage to the liberty, estates, or reputation of any members of the established church; for which end the sovereign has a right to receive appeals, to reverse their sentences, if he judges it needful, and to be himself, exempt from their jurisdiction. For how absurd would it be for him who is the head of the society, to be excluded from being a member of it? The cases of the emperor Theodosius [a], and of Ludovicus Pius, are not precedents sufficient to the contrary. If a sovereign behaves so plain against the welfare of the Christian church and religion, that he ought no longer to be suffered to be at the head of it, then the members of the church must give up his establishment; and, in that case, they may excommunicate him, but not while they continue under his establishment. Such an ejection could never rightfully be made, while an appeal lies to him, in all cases of the church's jurisdiction. It is therefore plain, that the establishing sovereign must have a right to re-

[a] See Stillingsf. Irenic. p. 447.

view and judge, upon appeal, of all acts of jurisdiction, exercised by the ecclesiastical governors of the church, and to reform, redress, and annul them as he finds it needful, and that he must himself be totally superior to, and exempt from, their jurisdiction.

IT is true, that the sovereign will not have any of these authorities over those, who dissent from, and refuse to submit to, his ecclesiastical establishment; for as they have not any benefit from it, of maintenance for their ministers or the like, they are not subject by their consent to these ecclesiastical authorities, which the sovereign derives only from the consent of the members of the church established. He cannot, therefore, justly interpose to judge of the censures of the dissenting congregations, nor to restore the members excommunicated by them; they are upon a foot, in this respect, independent of him.

BUT then it is likewise evident, on the other hand, that if the establishment be of the true religion, and, as such, be really for the benefit of the established church, and also of the civil state, it will then be the fault of all the subjects of the latter, who do not consent to this establishment, which, in reality, they ought to do; and therefore tho' they are not punishable by the sovereign, who (as I have shewn) is obliged to permit all his subjects to worship God and practice religion according to their own judgment, in all things not detrimental to the civil state; yet, they will, at the same time, be blameable before God, and will be punished by him hereafter, for acting against the welfare of the civil state, except in one case, *i. e.* unless their error in judging wrongly about this establishment, hath been invincible, that is, hath not proceeded from a vitious want of consideration, arising from prejudices, that might have been overcome, but from causes not in their power to alter; in this latter case, indeed, they will be acquitted.

BUT still they may, by the civil sovereign, be justly subjected to those taxes that are necessary for the maintenance of his ecclesiastical establishment; for as this is really for the benefit of the whole civil community, therefore all the members of that community may be justly subjected to the taxes that are necessary for its support; even

even those members who are under an invincible error with regard to it, because, the sovereign cannot, certainly, know that any particular persons, who dissent, are under such an invincible error; and even if he did know it, yet their error ought not to exempt them from contributing to any public burthen expedient to the whole, and necessary to be laid on all the members of the community.

LASTLY, if any of the dissenters are visibly and plainly, or if there be just grounds to suspect that they are, so extremely averse to the ecclesiastical establishment, and so fierce and resolute in their dispositions, that, if they had opportunity, they would endeavour to subvert and destroy it [b]; in such case, all persons of these dispositions may be justly excluded from such civil offices of trust, profit, and power, as might give them opportunity and means to act, with a prospect of success against the ecclesiastical establishment. For whatever right they may otherwise have to a capacity of such civil offices, upon the foot of their loyalty and affection to the civil state, considered merely as such, yet as being disaffected, and enemies to the ecclesiastical establishment, which is really, and greatly, for the benefit of the civil state; they are, on that account, to be considered, as so far disaffected to the civil state itself; and therefore may justly be kept out of offices of power, trust, and profit under it, by which offices they might be enabled to subvert and destroy the ecclesiastical establishment, and thereby very much hurt the civil state itself: For all the rights and capacities of every member of the community, are subject to, and ought to be limited by, considerations of the public welfare.

[b] Prynne, p. 112. Speaking of the Independents, Anabaptists, and other sectaries in England, during the latter part of the troubles after 1648, &c. says, "They would have none dissenting from them in opinion or party, either in the parliament, army, or any place of public profit or trust, were it in their power."

A
P L E A
FOR THE
SACRAMENTAL TEST, &c.†.

Οὐκ ἂν σιωπήσαιμι τὴν αἵτην ὁρῶν εἰχσσαν ἄσους ἀντὶ τῆς σωτηρίας.

THE Protestant dissenters from the church of England have lately made very great complaints, of their being obliged to receive the sacrament of the Lord's-supper once in this church, whenever they take an office in the state. They have publickly affirmed, that the laws [c] by which this is required are unjust, repugnant to the end for which this sacrament was ordained, and productive of much impiety in those by whom, in such cases, it is unworthily received. They have declared their resolutions of applying to the legislature for relief; and in order to do it with the greatest weight, have held several numerous assemblies of their friends, in which committees were appointed to act on their behalf, towards procuring a repeal of the corporation and test-acts, and were sent, in form, to solicit the ministers of state on this account. And though, upon the reports which these committees

† This piece, published in the year 1736, under the title of *A Plea for the Sacramental Test, as a just security to the church established, and very conducive to the Welfare of the State*, being but in few hands, and having a close connexion with the general subject of these tracts, and of the third in particular, the editors have thought proper to subjoin it here.

[c] By the 13th of Charles II. Stat. 2d. chap. 1st. it is enacted, That no person shall be capable of being elected into the office of mayor of any city, town, &c. or in any other office concerning the government of them,—that shall not have, within one year next before such election, taken the sacrament of the Lord's-supper, according to the rites of the church of England.

And by the 25th of Charles II. chap. 2. it is enacted, That all and every person or persons, that shall be admitted into any office or offices, civil or military, shall receive the sacrament of the Lord's-supper, according to the usage of the church of England, within three months after his or their admittance into or receiving their said authority or employment, in some public church, upon some Lord's-day, commonly called Sunday, immediately after divine service and sermon.

made

made in the years 1732, and 1733, that those were not fit times for bringing the matter before the parliament, the dissenters were prevailed upon to defer it; yet many of them did this with great reluctance, and not without professing that they were determined, very soon to pursue this point with all possible vigour. According to which resolutions, they have been ever since making such applications as they judge would be most serviceable to their cause.

IN this state of things, it cannot but be right in any one who approves the establishment of the church of England, to vindicate, as far as he can, those laws which contribute very much to its support, from the charges made upon them, and to shew that they are not only just, but expedient to be continued. This has indeed been done, some time ago, by an excellent writer [*d*], who fixed upon the true principle for the defence of these laws, and said as much as was then necessary to maintain it. But as, since that time, some objections have been made, and the general principle has with great freedom been treated as false; it may be not improper to offer some farther thoughts upon this subject. I purpose to do it in the following papers; with regard to which, I have only to desire, that they may be read, as I write them, with hearty concern for the lasting safety and welfare of our country.

IN order to vindicate the laws which enjoin the sacramental test, the first step must be to clear them from the charge of injustice, which the dissenters make upon them, in very invidiously aggravating terms. They endeavour to make good this charge by alledging, that as free-born subjects and well-affected to the civil government, they have a natural right to a capacity of serving their country in all public offices; which they might often do to it's great advantage. But the laws that oblige them, as a necessary condition of their holding offices, to communicate with the church of England, do, without just reason, intrench upon, and, in the case of many of them, quite defeat this capacity of offices to which they have a right; and therefore those laws are unjust. This, I

[*d*] Dr. Sherlock, late lord bishop of London, in his Vindication of the corporation and test-acts. Printed A. D. 1718.

think is the reasoning of the dissenters upon this subject, in its utmost force. In opposition to which, I humbly conceive, that the restraining condition thus put upon their capacity of offices is just; in regard that if all Protestant dissenters were capable of holding public offices, without the sacramental test, or some other equivalent means of excluding those who are so averse to the church of England, as to think that communion with her is unlawful; the consequence would be, that the establishment of this church, which is of great advantage to the state, would be endangered, and this danger would produce animosities and contests among the people, which would be of very ill consequences to the safety or the interest of the state: And therefore the dissenters capacity of offices is justly restrained, on a principle generally acknowledged to be true; to wit, that the civil rights of subjects ought to be submitted to, and may be diminished, for the public good. I have given our whole reasoning thus in short, and without disguise, that the reader may the better make a judgment of it; for in a matter of this consequence to our country, or indeed in any question debated in public, to raise clouds of dust in order to cover a bad cause, is a procedure unworthy of a man of probity, with whom no motives ought to prevail above his regard for truth and right. But that the force of this argument may be duly apprehended, it will be necessary to make some enlargement upon the several particulars it contains.

For which purpose, the first point to be considered is, Whether the admission of the Protestant dissenters to a capacity of offices, without some such restraint as the sacramental test, will not, in the natural course of things, endanger the present establishment of the church of England? That the Presbyterians, who of all the sectaries come the nearest to this church in doctrine and discipline, would yet desire the subversion of her establishment, if they had power to effect it, Mr. Rapin Thoyras, who knew them well, and was not prejudiced against them, was entirely satisfied [e].
And

[e] Dissertation sur les Whigs et les Tories, tom. x. de l'histoire d'Angleterre, à la Haye 1727, p. 253. "Il est certain que, si les Presbyteriens se voyent jamais en état

And it must indeed be evident, to any one who considers the general dispositions of the bulk of mankind, together with the history of our own nation. Men are naturally desirous that their own way of thinking should prevail. They are wont to approve and favour persons of the same opinion with themselves, in preference to others; especially when they think, not only that their own opinions and practices are right, but that those of their opponents are sinful, and that therefore it will be for the honour of God to have the latter be suppressed, and their own be promoted. Inducements of this kind are generally sufficient to put them upon endeavouring to spread their own notions; but most of all, when any secular advantage may be gained by so doing; for then human passions, mixed and covered with religious pretences, and thereby appearing to be justified, make them frequently act with extraordinary vehemence.

THESE are so much the common workings of human nature, that the law-givers in all states have thought themselves obliged to guard in some degree against them, for fear of their producing such enmities and contests among the subjects, of different religions, as might in the end disturb the public. Accordingly, as it has been a maxim, in all civilized states, to establish some religion; so, whenever there has been any other religion professed by such numbers of the subjects, as to be likely to rise into competition with the established one, the governors have always thought it fit that public offices of trust and profit should be confined, as far as the circumstances of the state would allow, to the professors of the latter; in order to give it such a superiority as would be requisite to preserve the public peace. I need not give instances of this conduct to those who are competently skilled in history: They must know it has been generally used by the wisest and best governed nations in the world.

état d'agir sans opposition, ils ne seront point contentes qu'ils n'ayent ruiné de fonds en comble la Hierarchie, et en general toute l'église Anglicane." It is certain, that if ever the Presbyterians are in a condition to act without being opposed, they will never be contented 'till they have totally destroyed the Hierarchy, and in general the whole church of England.

SOME

SOME few instances indeed may be given of countries, in which there have not been either any laws excluding all non-conformists to the established religion from employments in the state, or any religious tests designed for that purpose; but their governors have been at liberty to give offices to such persons when they should think it proper, and have actually employed them upon some occasions. The dissenters alledged, that this is the case in the united-provinces of the Netherlands, and in some parts of Germany. But in answer to these instances I must observe, that the political constitutions of those countries are so different from that of England, that no just argument can be drawn, from their practice on some particular occasions, to prove what ought to be done among us. In those countries, no offices of trust or profit, and much less any seats in the legislature, can be obtained by applications to the people only, without the approbation of persons in the government. For even in [f] Holland, the burghers at large of the several towns have no share at all in the choice of deputies to the states, nor of their own magistrates, senators, or other persons in employments, civil or military. The right of chusing all these, and disposing of all posts of trust or profit, lies either in the senate of each town, or in the provincial or general states. And a very great majority of these being Calvinists, they have it in their power effectually to hinder persons of any other religion from coming in among them; so that they have no need of any positive law, or any religious test to exclude them. And the like means of exclusion are equally needless in Prussia, and other parts of Germany; in which the princes, being absolute, have the magistracies and every thing else at their own disposal, if they think fit; and therefore they need not fear having more persons than they desire in public posts, of a religion different from the established one. They want no standing laws to keep them out. And yet it is farther observable, that, even in those countries, the non-conformists thus employed have generally been but few at a time;

[f] See Sir William Temple's Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands, chap. ii.

they appear to have been taken rather out of necessity, or particular convenience to the state, than out of free choice, and they have been made use of in those cases only, when there has been no ground to apprehend that the religion of the state would be endangered or affected by them: All which circumstances plainly shew, that those nations, which at any time have taken this course, have been as sensible as others of the natural disposition men have to promote their own religion, and that therefore due care ought to be taken, not to trust much power in the hands of persons ill affected to that religion which is established.

Now, are the dissenters from the church of England to be more safely trusted than any other men in any age or country of the world? Are they free from the common passions and desires of mankind? Will they have no zeal for propagating their opinions in religion, nor any concern for advancing their secular interests? Will they never want to have a share of those revenues and privileges which the church of England enjoys, exclusive of them? Will they never be uneasy at being forced to contribute to the maintenance of the clergy of that church, which they think so exceptionable? Would they not, if they had power sufficient, endeavour to put themselves and their religion upon a more advantageous foot? Perhaps some persons among them, who know what their present interest requires, may smoothly profess that they shall not aim at any thing more than an abolition of the test. But the bare professions of interested parties cannot justly expect to have credit given them, in a point of great importance to the public. There ought to be somewhat better grounds, for making a judgment of what may probably be expected from the dissenters, in case they should be trusted with so much power, as I shall hereafter shew that the repeal of the corporation and test-acts would let fall into their hands. And one of the best means to judge rightly what they would do for the future, is to consider both what the temper and conduct of their predecessors in the separation have all along been towards the church of England, and how far the present dissenters appear to resemble them: For the like dispositions and opportunities will be apt to produce the like effects,

effects, in every age. Let us then take a short and general view of the conduct and temper of the dissenters, since their first separation from the church, till the present time.

THE first objections made by the Puritans against the church, in the reign of queen Elizabeth, were chiefly on account of the habits that were enjoined to be used by the clergy, and of the ceremonies to be practised by them and the people in the public worship. These habits and ceremonies were in great measure the same that are at present used in our church: And were then retained by the Queen, not out of any superstitious regard to them, (for she expressly and publicly declared the contrary) but partly, in order to maintain a fit decency in the worship of God, and much more, out of a charitable desire to keep as many as possible of the middle and lower sort of people in the communion of the church. The Queen well knew that they were very much taken with outward forms, and were averse to have any great alterations made in that religion which they had been used to. While, therefore, she laid aside all those things that were really unlawful, she thought it would be expedient to let the ministering habits; and a few other such things, indifferent in their nature, continue to be used; because these might contribute greatly to keep many of those people in the church, and thereby get time for their being better instructed, and fixed in her communion; who, if they had seen all the forms of public worship at once entirely changed, would, probably, have been so much shocked and offended, that they would have gone over to the church of Rome. This design, and the success of the Queen in her proceedings, were plainly acknowledged even by Sanders, a Popish writer [g], who says that “ she contributed very much to the firmness and establishment of “ her heresy, by not leaving the affair (of the reformation) to the “ humourfome management of the new clergy, by whose Gos-

[g] Nicol. Sanderi Historia Schismatis Anglicani. Colonia Agrippina, A. D. 1628, pag. 283. Certe fecit plurimum ad stabilitatem firmitatemque hæreseos, quod non permittebatur res istius novi cleri libidini, quæ jamdudum hæc libertate evangelicâ abiisset in fumum, nisi fuisset hæc humanâ politiâ & sustentata & frænata.

“pel-liberty, it had long since gone off into smoke; unless it had, by this human policy, been kept in bounds and supported.” As these were sufficiently known to be the motives of the Queen’s conduct, and as the things enjoined were really indifferent in their own nature, it is wonderful that so much difficulty could be made about them. However, as some of those who at first had scruples, were men of otherwise valuable characters, and peaceably disposed, the Queen was willing to connive at their non-conformity, in hopes that time would soften and dissolve their groundless prejudices. She not only bore, for several years, with their irregularities of this kind, but permitted many of them to continue possessed of their benefices, and even dignities in the church. But this forbearance on her part was far from having it’s desired effect. The Puritans grew more attached to their principles, and more violent in their conduct. They openly declared against all impositions in religion, though of things indifferent in their own nature, and enjoined by the highest authority in church and state. They resolved not to be quiet, unless the public establishment was altered, and their own favourite platform of church-government and discipline was settled in its room. They made no scruple to affirm publicly in formal admonitions to the parliament, that this ought to be done; and when they found that applications of this kind would not gain their point with the Queen, who, for reasons that will hereafter be mentioned, was not inclined to favour them, they resolved to proceed in other methods. They fell into all the popular ways they could contrive, to recommend their own scheme of worship and discipline, and make the liturgy and government of the church established, odious in the nation. Particularly, they treated the bishops and clergy with grossly [b] indecent and opprobrious language. In the year 1566, they actually separated from the

[b] Mr. Cartwright, in his public lectures at Cambridge, as lady Margaret’s professor, declared, “That in the church of England there was no lawful ordinary calling of ministers, nor any ministry: That the election of ministers and bishops at this day was tyrannous; and that archbishops, bishops, deans, and archdeacons, were but offices and names of impiety.” *Strype’s Life of Archbishop Parker*, pag. 312.

the church, they soon after put their own discipline into practice [i] in those parts of the kingdom where their influence was the greatest, and in some of their writings gave out open menaces [k] against the civil government itself, if it would not comply and establish their scheme. These factious proceedings were the true reasons, as that wise and good statesman [l] Sir Francis Walsingham observes, why Queen Elizabeth altered her conduct towards them, and used greater severity than she had done before. She saw that neither her legal prerogative, nor the peace of the kingdom could be preserved, unless their turbulent spirit was restrained; and she was therefore obliged to practice some rigours, which at first were no part of her intention.

THE

“ Our bishops, said others of the Puritans, are proud, popish, presumptuous, paltry, pestilent, and pernicious Prelates; they are usurpers, they are cogging and cozening knaves; the bishops will lye like dogs. They are limbs of antichrist, monstrous ungodly wretches, that, to maintain their own outrageous proceedings, mingle heaven and earth together.” Strype’s Life of Archbishop Whitgift, pag. 298. More language of this kind might be produced, if it was proper to trouble the reader with it.

[i] Strype’s Life of Archbishop Whitgift, pag. 290, and 327.

[k] Speaking of their own discipline, which they call the cause of God, they say, “ that if it come in by that means which will make your hearts ake, blame yourselves; for it must prevail, malgre the malice of all that stand out against it, or such a judgment must overtake the land, as shall cause the ears that hear thereof to tingle.” Strype’s Life of Archbishop Whitgift, pag. 333, 334.

One of them (Payne) in a letter written to his friend, says, “ It is more than time to register the names of the fittest and hottest of the brethren round about their several dwellings, whereby to put Suecanus’s good counsel in execution, to wit, that if the magistrate will not, then to erect it themselves.”

Another braggeth of “ an hundred thousand hands, and wisheth the parliament to bring in this reformation, though it be by withstanding the Queen’s majesty.”

Others exhort their friends to “ buckle with the bishops, and to massacre those malkin’s ministers. Let the devil and his deputies the bishops do what they can: In the mean time, let us take our pennyworth of them, and not die in their debts.” Strype’s Life of Archbishop Whitgift, pag. 334.

[l] In his letter to Mr. Critoy, in Burnet’s Hist. Reform. vol. ii. p. 388, he says of the Puritans, “ That for a great while, when they inveighed against such abuses in the church as pluralities, non-residence, and the like, their zeal was not condemned, only their violence was sometimes censured. When they refused the use of some ceremonies and rites, as superstitious, they were tolerated with much
“ connivance

THE same reasons determined king James the first, and king Charles the first, to imitate her conduct. But the wrong measures of those two princes, as to civil government, having given the Puritans who opposed the court, the advantage of becoming popular, and appearing to contend for the liberties of the nation, their party encreased so much in that parliament of 1641, that at length, by a course of measures sometimes very artful, and at other times tumultuous, they obtained, what they had been so long endeavouring, the abolition of the prelacy, worship, and discipline of the church of England, and the exaltation of their own Presbyterian scheme in their room. And how did they use their power when they had it? Did they suffer the clergy to retain their benefices and preferments? or did they allow any congregations, or private persons, a liberty to worship God according to the service of the church of England? On the contrary, besides the attempts they made, by methods of iniquity, to blast the reputation of many of the clergy, they required them [m] all to take that solemn league and covenant, with which they knew that the faithful

“ connivance and gentleness: Yea, when they called in question the superiority of
“ bishops, and pretended to a democracy in the church, their propositions were here
“ considered, and by contrary writings debated and discussed. — But now of late
“ years, when there issued from them those that affirmed, the consent of the magi-
“ strate was not to be attended; when under pretence of a confession, to avoid slander
“ and imputations, they combined themselves by classes and subscriptions; when
“ they descended into that vile and base means of defacing the government of the
“ church by ridiculous pasquils; when they began to make many subjects in doubt
“ to take oaths, which is one of the fundamental parts of justice in this land, and
“ in all places; when they began both to vaunt of their strength and number of
“ their partizans and followers, and to use comminations that their cause would
“ prevail through uproar and violence; then it appeared to be no more zeal, no
“ more conscience, but mere faction and division. And therefore, though the state
“ were compelled to hold somewhat a harder hand to restrain them than before,
“ yet it was with as great moderation as the peace of the state or church would
“ permit.”

[m] By a joint ordinance of the lords and commons, Feb. 2, 1643, it was provided, That the covenant should be taken in all places throughout the kingdom of England and dominion of Wales, by all above the age of eighteen: And that the committees of parliament should summon all the ministers, and cause the covenant to be tendered to them. Walker on the Sufferings of the Clergy, p. 106.

[n] In.

ful sons of the church of England could not comply; and those who refused it, they not only threw out of all their preferments, but generally sequestred their temporal estates, if they had any such, and on every the least pretence, found means, by the civil or military power, to harass and oppress them. In like manner the gentry, and others of the laity, besides the great hardships many of them suffered in their [n] temporal concerns, were all prohibited to use, or cause to be used, even in private, the liturgy of the church of England [o]. In case they did so, they forfeited for the first offence, five pounds; for the second, ten pounds; and for the third, were to suffer a year's imprisonment. Such rigours of different kinds were continued, till the body of the nation, unable to bear them any longer, most gladly restored king Charles the second; with whom the church of England recovered her rights.

AT this time, we may reasonably suppose that the spirits of the dissenters were much less violent than before; and we are therefore not to wonder, if they were somewhat inclined to an accommodation with the church of England. And yet there was a remarkable incident in the conference held for that purpose in the Savoy, which shews what a disposition they still were in, with regard to this church. The commissioners on her part desired them to propose what amendments they thought necessary to be made in the Book of Common-Prayer. This service had been at first composed, in the reign of Edward the sixth, by the united labours of a number of the most eminent divines, of whom some, in the following reign, were martyrs, and others were confessors in exile, for the sake of their religion. After several reviews, it had been approved by the highest authority in the nation at home, and by Protestants of eminent character abroad [p]. However, in compli-

[n] In the year 1643, the lords and commons made an ordinance, That none should bear office or trust in their armies, or in the kingdom, but such as had taken the covenant; nor even they themselves, if they had formerly been imprisoned or sequestred upon suspicion of malignancy. Echard's Hist. of England, vol. ii. p. 458.

[o] Scobel's Collect. of Acts, &c. chap. 57.

[p] The celebrated Grotius, in a letter to his brother dated April 8, 1645, says, "That

compliance with the scruples of the Presbyterians, the commissioners were disposed to hear and examine the alterations they should offer: But instead of proposing any particulars, they thought fit to throw aside the whole liturgy at once, as hardly possible to be corrected [q], or rendered useful, and gave in a new one, drawn up entirely by Mr. Baxter. There needs no great penetration, to discover from what spirit such a piece of behaviour flowed, and how it might probably exert itself at more favourable opportunities. And can we then wonder, that the church was somewhat afraid to lay herself open to men of that character, by taking them into her establishment? Indeed, the Presbyterians were the less solicitous about being received, because they were encouraged by promises from the court, that they should be taken care of, and have favour shewed them, if they continued in a body, and formed an interest separate from the church. The design of the court in applying thus to them, was really, that by keeping them up, as a set of people who were likely to be tolerated, they might gain at the same time, a toleration for the Papists, about whom the king and the duke of York were heartily concerned. Whether the Presbyterians in general suspected this design, I will not positively affirm,

“ That the English liturgy was always accounted the best by learned men.” See Le Clerc’s edition of Grotius on the Truth of the Christian Religion, translated by Dr. John Clarke, p. 331, where there are several proofs of the great respect which Grotius had for the church of England.

The learned Spanheim, writing to archbishop Usher from Geneva, in 1638, says, “ I often call to mind that pleasing face of things in your church; that reverence in the public worship of God, that attention and fervour of your countrymen in the service of God,—the like to which you will hardly find elsewhere.” Epist. Ded. part 3. Dub. Evang.

Mr. Gaches, whom Dr. Calamy, in his abridgment of Mr. Baxter’s Life, p. 568, styles a famous preacher at Charenton, speaking of the liturgy of the church of England, says, “ I have read it a long time ago, and was wonderfully edified by it.” Durel of the Government and Worship of the Reformed Churches, Lond. 1662, p. 66. In which book are many other testimonies of foreign divines to the same purpose.

[q] Mr. Pierce, in his Vindication of the Dissenters, 2d edition, Lond. 1718, p. 225, says, “ That the very form of the English liturgy was disliked by the ministers, and they thought it much easier to draw up a new one, than to mend the old one.”

though

though some of them have not scrupled to acknowledge it [r]. But there is ground, at least, to think that their views of being supported, and continuing separate from the church, were much more agreeable to the chiefs of the dissenters, than the making any considerable advances on their part, in order to be taken into her communion.

THIS appears by their conduct, with regard to the endeavours used not long afterwards, by some persons of eminence and distinguished moderation in our church, to bring them into it. In 1668, lord-keeper Bridgman, lord-chief-justice Hale, and two or three divines at their request, had conferences for this purpose with some leading Presbyterians; but found them so backward to make any reasonable advances, or adhere to those that they seemed to make, that they grew weary of treating with them. Dr. Calamy in his letter to archdeacon Echard, p. 75, seems unwilling to believe the truth of an account given to this purpose in his history of England, vol. iii. p. 237, but he does not venture to contradict it, and his caution was just; for it might have been supported by a positive declaration made by Dr. Burton [s], who had been chaplain to the lord-keeper, and was one of the persons employed by him in this negotiation. And this may be thought very probable to have been the real disposition of the Presbyterians at that time, if we consider the account which Dr. Calamy himself has given of them, in his abridgment of the life of Baxter, p. 598, where he says, that about the year 1672, “so ill a spirit was got among
“some of them, who but just before were in a suffering condition, that many were much offended at Mr. Baxter’s preaching
“for union, and against division, or unnecessary withdrawing from

[r] Mr. Pierce, in his Vindication of the Dissenters, p. 228, says, “That the despised Presbyterians were not so stupid, as not plainly to perceive at what king Charles was driving.” If this was true, is it not very strange they should cultivate an interest at court, so much as even Dr. Calamy allows they did? who in his letter to archdeacon Echard, Lond. 1718, p. 71, hath these words, “That the
“Presbyterian ministers, both then and afterwards, depended on a court-interest
“more than they had any just ground for, I believe to be very true.”

[s] See a Vindication of the Rights of Ecclesiastical Authority by William Sherlock, D. D. Lond. 1685, p. 188.

“ each

“ each other, and unwarrantable narrowing of the church of
“ Christ.” We see that the dissenters could hardly bear with
even those among themselves, who were for counsels of peace, and
endeavoured to make them less averse to the church of England:
From whence we may conclude, that they were in no fit temper
for a treaty with her. “ Accordingly, in the year 1681, when a
“ bill of comprehension was offered by the Episcopal party in the
“ house of commons, by which the Presbyterians would have
“ been taken into the church,” we are told by a writer of those
times, “ that, to the amazement of all people, their party did not
“ seem concerned to promote it; on the contrary, they neglect-
“ ed it. And that this increased the jealousy, as if they hoped
“ they were so near carrying all before them, that they despised a
“ comprehension.”

THE truth is, the dissenters were, about this time, much exalt-
ed in their hopes, by observing what a change had happened in
the temper of the nation, to the disadvantage of the bishops and
the clergy. The bishops had made themselves very unpopular, by
adhering to the court, in some points of importance then in agi-
tation; which though they might do with a good conscience, as
thinking the measures of the other party were too violent and dan-
gerous, to be for the true interest of the nation, yet so great was
the ferment which had been raised by the Popish plot, that many
were highly offended with them, and with the clergy in general,
for acting as they did, and not falling into the warmest measures
of opposition to the court. Not a few, even of the church, were
alienated from them in their affections on that account. And of
this the dissenters were so much disposed to make an advantage,
that, as we are informed by the historian last mentioned [1], who
was never violent against them, “ They behaved themselves very
“ indecently: For though, says he, many of the most moderate
“ clergy were trying if advantage might be taken, from the ill
“ state we were in, to heal those breaches that were among us,
“ they, on their part, fell severely upon the body of the clergy.”

[1] Burnet's Hist. of his own Times, vol. i. p. 461.

And presently afterwards he adds, "That the press, being open, became very licentious, both against the court and the clergy. And in this the non-conformist had so great a hand, that the bishops and clergy apprehending that a rebellion, and with it the pulling the church to pieces, was designed, set themselves, on the other hand, to write against the late times, and to draw a parallel between the present times and them." He is so impartial, indeed, as to acknowledge that this parallel was not decently enough managed, by those who undertook the argument on the behalf of the clergy; he means, I suppose, that the writers on that side reproached the dissenters too severely, with their former treatment of the crown and the church: But, as occasion was given to these reproaches by fresh provocations of the same kind, we cannot think it strange, that they were made with some severity. But, however that might be, the reader will perceive that this conduct, on the part of the dissenters, did not look like a design of ever coming into the church, but rather, of pursuing the same course they had taken before, to ruin her establishment, and raise one of their own in its stead.

AND to this, it is probable, they might be not a little encouraged by what they saw done at that time in Scotland. About the year 1670, [u] bishop Leighton, and others of moderate principles in that church, wherein episcopacy was then the established government, had been endeavouring earnestly to promote an accommodation between the church and the Presbyterian party. To which end, they were willing to desist from some points of superiority and jurisdiction over the clergy, which had been always claimed as the certain rights of the Episcopal order, and were really warranted by the practice of the church in its three first ages. Bishop Leighton entreated the Presbyterians, that considering the unhappy effects of schism, and the moderation of the church in making such advances, they would not be wanting on their part to accept these terms, which they might do with honour, as well as justice, and so restore an union exceedingly ne-

[u] Burnet's Hist. of his own Times, vol. i. p. 290—297.

cessary for the interest of religion. But they were quite unmoved by all that he could say. They hoped, that by keeping their own party united, they should, at some time or other, oblige the civil government to come in with them. So, instead of making any steps on their side towards an agreement, they endeavoured to keep up the spirits of their people, in expectation that, at a proper juncture, they might work their way over the head of the church. And indeed, at the revolution in 1688, this happened as they expected. By their falling in with it, while the Scottish bishops and many of the clergy stood out against it, king William was induced to the abolition of Episcopal government, and the establishment of the Presbyterian in that kingdom. And when the gentlemen of this persuasion had once the power in their hands, they treated the poor Episcopal clergy in the like, and even a worse manner, than they had before been used in England, when the Presbyterians prevailed there. Bishop Burnet tells us [*w*], “ that
“ in the west of Scotland they generally broke in upon the Episcopopal clergy with great insolence, and much cruelty: They
“ carried them about the parishes in a mock procession: They
“ tore their gowns, and drove them from their churches and
“ houses: Nor did they treat those of them who had appeared
“ very zealously against Popery, with any distinction.” And whoever will read five tracts written at that time, concerning the state of the Episcopal clergy, and an answer to them by Mr. Rule, may from them, and even from some concessions made by the latter, find reason to think that bishop Burnet did not exceed the truth in his account.

IN the other two kingdoms, the revolution did not produce so great effects, to the advantage of the dissenters. But as the success of their friends in Scotland, and the hopes they themselves entertained from king William, gave them high spirits, so wherever they had any opportunity, they shewed sufficiently what they would be at, if they had power in their hands. In some parts of Ireland, the Presbyterians, being very numerous, used their wealth and interest as far as they could, to bear hard upon their neigh-

[*w*] Hist. of his own Times, vol. i. p. 805.

bours of the established church, in the way of trade, and in other respects, that so they might be obliged, for their own security, to leave her communion. Of this the bishop of Derry, in his second admonition to the dissenters of his diocese [x], publicly complained. "Some of your teachers, says he, p. 120, seem to be of as persecuting a spirit as the Papists, and have so far influenced the most zealous of their hearers, that they already persecute, as far as they have power, those that dissent from them; infomuch, that, as I observed before, some that are heartily desirous to come to church, dare not, for fear of being undone by their neighbours." And that this account was not aggravated, but that these oppressions were continued, has appeared since very plainly, by a representation from the house of lords of Ireland to queen Ann, of which the substance was as follows: That the dissenters had opposed and persecuted the conformists, in those parts where their power prevailed, had invaded their congregations, and propagated their schism in places where it had not the least footing formerly;—That they refused to take conforming apprentices, and confined trade among themselves, exclusive of the conformists; That in their illegal assemblies, they had prosecuted and censured their people for being married according to law; That they had thrown public and scandalous reflections upon the Episcopal order, and upon our laws, particularly the sacramental test; and had misapplied the royal bounty of 1200 l. per ann. in propagating the schism, and undermining the church; and had executed an illegal jurisdiction in their Presbyteries and Synods, &c. We see here what a spirit they shewed, and what use they made of their power, as far as it would go.

THEY had less encouragement to do any thing of this kind in England, because the body of the nation was heartily disposed to support the church. But the dissenters, presuming, more perhaps than they had reason upon their interest in king William, and hoping that the weight of the court might go far in their behalf, did soon make some public steps which shewed what their views were even in this kingdom. Sir Humphry Edwin, who was

[x] Dated March 13, 1695, and printed at London, 1696.

lord-mayor of London in 1698, thought fit to go, with the ensigns of his magistracy, to a dissenting meeting. When this was complained of, by some writers on the side of the church, the dissenters answered in such a manner as shewed plainly how far they carried their pretensions. One who wrote on their behalf, some time after this affair, was Mr. James Pierce, whom I quote the rather, because he declares in the preface of his book [y], that it had given good satisfaction universally to his brethren, when it was published in Latin, and that it was the general opinion of his friends, that the putting it into English might be of service: So that this author may be justly considered as one who may let us know the general disposition of the dissenters towards the church of England. Now he, speaking of this action of Sir Humphry Edwin, p. 276, of the first part of his Vindication, has these words: "If the laws permit the lord-mayor to frequent our
" assemblies, why might not he carry those ensigns (of his magistracy) with him?—One would think the church looks
" upon those fine things as her property, or supposes they have
" been allowed by some bishop, and so were profaned by being
" carried into any place of worship not first consecrated by one
" of that order." This gentleman must have known, that the church of England does not look upon those ensigns of magistracy as hallowed, nor pretends any other claim to them, than as she is the church established by law; which may justly entitle her to some degrees of respect, not claimable by dissenting congregations, which are only tolerated. But this reason, it seems, was not thought of any weight by our author; for p. 278, he affirms, that
" the religion of the dissenters is as truly established as that of
" the church of England." And again in the same place, "I
" acknowledge, says he, that the church of England was formerly the only religion established by law; but when the old severe
" laws against us were repealed, and a new one was enacted, that
" left every one to his own judgment in the choice of his religion; how can our religion be said not to be established?"

[y] A Vindication of the Dissenters, &c.

And

And he is not contented to have raised their sect into an establishment, and thereby into a competition with the church of England, but he goes on to insult those of her communion, who might be uneasy on that account. “ Oh men of Israel ! says he, come
 “ in from all quarters, and help the distressed, whose sorrowful
 “ case is, since the first starting of the controversy, become much
 “ worse ; for, ever since the two kingdoms were united, the Pre-
 “ sbyterian has been an established and national religion in Great-
 “ Britain, in the same sense in which the Episcopal one is so ; nay,
 “ in some sense it is more established than the Episcopal, in as
 “ much as the Episcopal may be altered by parliament, whereas
 “ the Presbyterian in Scotland cannot, according to the articles of
 “ the Union.” And not thinking it enough to say that our establishment may be altered, he in other places makes no scruple to declare that it ought to be altered. “ The generality of the Eng-
 “ lish Presbyterians, says he, p. 204, as far as I can judge, don’t
 “ differ much from them, (the Presbyterians who took the cove-
 “ nant in 1643.) wishing the present very corrupt form of pre-
 “ lacy were abolished, and the true ancient episcopacy were re-
 “ stored.” And unless this and some other things be done, he declares against any union or accommodation with the church of England. “ Let all our brethren, says he, p. 285, through the
 “ whole world be judges, whether we have not good reason ut-
 “ terly to forsake the tents of these men, and keep at the greatest
 “ distance from their communion.” After which he adds in the same page, the following words : “ We have all along desired
 “ peace, and will still most cheerfully embrace it, as soon as the
 “ unrighteous conditions which now obstruct it are removed. But
 “ if no alteration can be made in the terms, there is an end of all
 “ hope of [z] peace and concord.”

[z] This free declaration of our author puts me in mind of what was said by the excellent Grotius, about Mr. Calvin the great founder of the Presbyterian sect :
 “ Eum si sequimur, nulla pax erit nisi omnes in Genevensium dogmata, ritus, &
 “ rigorem transeant.” Rivet. Apol. Discuss. inter Grot. Oper. tom. iv. p. 739.
 If we follow Calvin, there will be no peace, unless all go over to the doctrines, the rites, and the stiffness of the people of Geneva.

Mr.

MR. Pierce here declares that the notions of the Presbyterians now, are the same with those of their predecessors in 1643: And indeed, if we were not sufficiently informed of it, by one who was so well acquainted with the general sentiments of their party, we might have reason to think so, from observing what pains have been lately taken by several of our chief dissenters, to write the lives, and celebrate the memories of some of the noted men in those times. Dr. Calamy has done this remarkably, in his abridgment of the life of Mr. Baxter, and in others of his works, in which he extols not only Mr. Baxter, but many more of the non-conformists, as so venerable for their piety and other good qualities, that they were men [a] of whom the word was not worthy. The like encomiums have been made upon Dr. Manton, who preached at Cromwell's inauguration, and [b] recommended his highness to the blessing of God; upon Dr. Owen, who was a particular favourite of the protector's; and upon divers other worthies of that age. And lately Mr. Neal has published a work to vindicate and adorn the characters of those more antient Puritans, who made the first disturbances in the church in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and of those who continued them down from that time to the great rebellion [c].

Now what can with reason be concluded from all these proceedings, but that the dissenters of the present age have much the same principles and dispositions towards the church, with those their so greatly admired predecessors; and would, in a proper conjuncture of affairs, be likely to take the same measures against her?

[a] Calamy's Def. of Mod. Non-conformity, part ii. Lond. 1704. Preface, pag. 11.

[b] Whitlock's Mem. p. 661.

[c] In the 3d vol. of this history, which is carried on to the death of king Charles I. the author hath not scrupled to say that the royal army was little better than a company of banditti or public robbers. Perhaps, for want of pay, which that unfortunate prince was not able to give them, his troops might be sometimes put upon acts of violence, in order to subsist themselves: But, even admitting this, surely such titles were not fit to be given to an army commissioned by their king, and in which most of the chief families of England had some relations in service.

The only material and avowed change of principles, that I can find to have been among them, seems to be with regard to the toleration of those whom they think to be erroneous in religion: In that point, indeed, they no longer adhere to the rigid notions of the ancient sectaries. They have made some public and full declarations for general liberty of judgment and profession, for mutual forbearance and Christian benevolence. But are these declarations to be understood as importing security to the church of England in her present state, supposing that they had power sufficient to alter it? Not at all. Mr. Pierce [d] in his answer to Dean Sherlock, no longer ago than the year 1718, very frankly acquaints us, if we think so, we are much mistaken. The Dean, says he, asks, "Have any of the dissenters declared that they are
 " for maintaining the church as by law established?" To which he answers, "It would be very strange if they should. Can they
 " dislike so many things as they do in the church, and yet be
 " against altering them?" From whence it is plain, that before this gentleman, and those of his mind, would be content that our establishment should be maintained, there are many things to be altered in it.

AND much to the like purpose, we have yet more lately the sentiments of another writer on the same side [e]; who, after he has observed, in decent expressions, "That the church of England hath already devoured many a rich morsel; that surely it
 " must be an unconscionable stomach that can be contented with
 " nothing less than the whole; and that this may occasion a dangerous surfeit;" proceeds to assure us, "That the dissenters are
 " absolutely content, 'till her arms are opened a little wider, to
 " leave her in possession of every emolument belonging to her as
 " mother church." It is certainly kind in the dissenters to leave the church, for any time at all, in quiet possession of what she has. But how much wider must her arms be opened in order to receive

[d] Some reflections upon Dean Sherlock's Vindication of the corporation and test-acts, by James Pierce, Lond. 1718. p. 29.

[e] The Dispute better adjusted, about the proper Time of applying for a Repeal of the Corporation and Test-Acts. Lond. 1732. p. 17, 18.

them?

them? The measure of latitude, necessary to this end, is not quite proper to be mentioned at present. The only farther explanation he gives of this point, is in p. 30, where, having told us, "that
" the body of the dissenters are friends to an establishment, and
" would be so even to our establishment, provided our foundations
" were a little larger, and some proper alterations were made,"
he adds, for our comfort, "that these alterations would not in
" the least lessen the honour or revenues of the church, or render
" the establishment of it in the least more precarious or feeble."
From whence we may collect, that the temporalities of the church being to remain as they are, her doctrine, or her polity, or both, are to be affected by these alterations. Probably her articles must be reformed, and her methods of ordination, institution, and jurisdiction must be changed, to satisfy this author and his adherents. But has he the consciences of the dissenters at his disposal? does he know that all, or a majority, or any considerable part of them, will be satisfied with his scheme of alterations? Have the deputies from their several meetings entirely agreed among themselves what alterations they would have? I hardly believe they have gone so far yet, or will do it very soon. But suppose this was done: Are the governors and members of the church of England to have no satisfaction given to them that these alterations are right to be made? Might not some of them be repugnant or disparaging to doctrines which they esteem very important truths? Might not others break in upon antient constitutions, which they think of apostolical, or divine authority, and therefore not to be given up to any demands? I believe there would be at least as many in this church, and among them persons of eminent character for piety and learning, who would take offence at such alterations, as there would be of the dissenters well satisfied with them. And what then would the church be really the better for opening her arms to receive these new friends? or how would their admission conduce to the maintenance of harmony and peace among her members? One effect of it indeed would be, that a number of persons of this author's principles might get into the establishment, and partake of those honours and revenues for
T which

which they express so kind a concern. But would the establishment be ever the firmer, or ever the more useful to the state on this account? Let any one consider what was the case of the church established in 1641, when so many persons disaffected to her polity, were within her arms? Did they not make use of their situation to distress their equals, and pull down their superiors? did they not presume to disturb and new-model the whole constitution of the church? and did not their attempts and success in this way produce a deplorable state of confusion? I shall hereafter have occasion to mention somewhat of this kind: In the mean time, I think, that, from what has been said, and the passages cited from dissenting writers of late, as well as of former times; we may justly conclude, that they are not disposed to suffer the establishment of our church to continue as it is; but would, if they had power, forthwith make a number of such alterations as they think proper. Which is in effect, the same as to say, that indeed they desire there should be an establishment with honours and revenues; but that these should be annexed to such doctrines, and such a polity only as they approve: And until this be done, they will never be quiet, but will always be endeavouring to bring it to pass.

WE might indeed, as I observed above, have had some reason to conclude this, if we only considered the general inclinations of mankind to promote and propagate their own opinions in religion, and to obtain as great a share as they can of secular advantages along with them: But when, to this ground of judgment, is added the experience we have had, in such a course of years, of the spirit and temper of the dissenters towards the church; and moreover, the signs they give even now, of the continuance of the same dispositions, by celebrating the memories of their predecessors in the separation, and avowing most of their tenets; we have, I think, in these circumstances, as much evidence as can well be expected in a matter of this nature, and such as may justify our acting, as there may be occasion, upon it. This then is the first thing I proposed to shew, to wit, That the body of the dissenters would

desire the subversion of the present establishment of the church of England, if they had power to effect it.

THE second thing I advance, is, That by a capacity of public offices without any restraint, the dissenters in a short time would come to have so much power as would be sufficient at least to endanger this establishment, if not, in the end, to effect its subversion. And this will be likewise evident, if we consider the whole body of those dissenters, who, if any of them have a right to a capacity of offices without a religious test, must all be allowed to have the same right. Those who have been the most forward of late to put in their claim to this right, are the Presbyterians, Independents, and Anabaptists: But there are many others who may, with as much reason as these, expect to be considered and treated as good subjects of the state.

IN the first place, this may truly be affirmed of the Quakers. They have, for many years past, not only practised a quiet submission to the civil government, but have professed a true loyalty and affection to it. And there is the more reason to give credit to them in this point, because their interest is productive of these dispositions; and because the genius and manners of their sect, averse to every thing of military practice, do, in some measure, disable them to be dangerous, by open disturbance, to the public peace. This body of men, therefore, has a right, as good subjects, to all the same privileges as other Protestant dissenters; and particularly to a like unrestrained capacity of offices in the state.

ANOTHER considerable set of Protestants who differ from the church of England, are the Arians, Socinians, and others, by whatever name they be called, who are heterodox with regard to the sacred Trinity. The number of these is not a little increased of late years. Men are pleased to have all points of religion brought within the compass of their reason, and cannot easily digest those acknowledgments, which in the orthodox scheme are necessary to be made, of the weakness and defectiveness of human understanding: On which account 'tis not very improbable, but these Anti-trinitarians may in length of time gain numerous converts; and when they have done so, may resume the design

they have formerly had, of holding separate assemblies for divine worship; that they may not be obliged to join in forms which they think dishonourable to the one supreme God. But whatever the increase of their numbers may be, there is reason to think that they will be as quiet and well-affected subjects to the civil government, as the other Protestant dissenters are. For none of their tenets are of such a nature as will incline them to dispute the rightfulness of the present civil settlement, or put them upon any attempts to disturb it. A man who believes that the eternal Father of all things cannot have any equal, and that therefore the word God is applied to the Son in a lower sense, may, notwithstanding this opinion, preserve a due loyalty to the King, and affection to his country: He may have charity for his neighbours, and be disposed to live in peace with them; in a word, he may perform all the social duties, as well as another man who is right in his belief. Mr. Neal has declared himself as to this matter in very full terms. "An heretick, says he, or a non-conformist to the established religion, may be a most loyal and dutiful subject, and deserve the highest preferment his prince can bestow [f]." I cannot go so far as this author in his compliment to hereticks; but I think it indeed evident that they may be as peaceable and even loyal subjects to a civil government, as the Presbyterians, or other Protestant dissenters: And therefore, upon the general principle which these latter make the ground of their claim, the Anti-trinitarians, even tho' they should openly profess themselves such, and separate from the church, yet ought to have an equally free capacity of offices in the state. The reader will see that what hath been said concerning these, is to be applied to all sorts of Christians, however erroneous they are in religion, provided they be well-affected to the state. And, perhaps, he may think that others, besides Christians, have also a right to be included in this application; in regard that it is both possible and likely that they may be good subjects to the civil government. Mr. Chandler has

[f] Hist. of the Puritans, vol. iii. p. 312.

declared,

declared [g], " He does not apprehend that the profession of
" any particular religion, as it stands contradistinguished from the
" law of nature, is, in the nature of things, necessary to the
" safety and good order of government, which may be support-
" ed by a due regard to the practice of the moral duties, and by
" a proper care in the civil magistrate to enforce the observation
" of them, in all who are subject to their authority and govern-
" ment; which will be sufficiently supported by such a regard to
" moral duties notwithstanding the greatest diversity of opinions in
" other things, even though the community should consist of some
" Deists, some Mahometans, and some Christians." In this pas-
sage, if I understand it rightly, the author's meaning seems to be,
that as persons of the religions here mentioned acknowledge the
being and providence of God, with the moral obligations from
thence incumbent upon mankind, they may, by the influence of
these principles upon them, be loyal subjects under any govern-
ment that is rightly administred. Now if this be true, then, in
pursuance of the general principle laid down by the dissenters, in
behalf of all subjects well affected to the civil government, it must
follow, that free-born Englishmen, although they should openly
profess themselves Deists, yet ought not to have their civil rights
at all abridged on that account, by any test, or other means, but
ought to be allowed to be as freely capable as Christian subjects,
of offices in the state. Which doctrine, if it be good, will proba-
bly encourage a number of persons to offer their service to the
public, who cannot conscientiously do it at present.

BUT supposing this capacity of offices should be restrained to
Christians only, yet, if we consider how numerous all the sectaries
or hereticks professing this religion, are at present, or may be
hereafter, they will appear to be a body justly formidable to the
church of England. For though they differ among themselves in
many respects, and might be ill enough inclined to each other, in
case they were competitors for any advantage, yet, while there is
nothing of that sort to set them at variance, they will probably

[g] *Reflections on the Conduct of Modern Deists, &c.* Lond. 1727. Pref. p. 5.

agree in being enemies to the establishment of the church, and in endeavouring to weaken and subvert it: Because in its subversion, they may all hope to find their several advantages, in one way or another. If they cannot all expect to gain such an establishment for themselves as the church has at present, yet they may all hope to have some allowances from the state for their several teachers, according to a scheme that is said to be formed by some of their friends: Or, if this point should prove too hard to be gained, they may, at least, hope to be relieved from that unjust burthen, as the Quakers and many others account it, of paying to an established ministry, and may reasonably expect to increase very much their several sects, when there shall not be a regular body to oppose them. These, and other motives of the like nature, did, in fact, engage the different sectaries in 1641, to act in close concert and union together for demolishing the church of England. Not only the Presbyterians, who hoped to be established in the room of the church, but the Independents and the Anabaptists, the Enthusiasts who were for the fifth monarchy, and others of that turn, who knew not what they were for, yet all heartily agreed “in declaring, before God, with up-lifted hands, that they would extirpate the episcopal government by archbishops, bishops, deans, and chapters, and all the officers dependent upon them;” which accordingly, by their joint assistance, was brought to pass.

THEN indeed, after a little time, these sects began to quarrel among themselves; and the Presbyterians, who came nearest to obtain an establishment, most bitterly reproached the Independents, the Anabaptists, and other sectaries, with their schism, their ill principles, and their hypocrisy, as what produced insupportable disorders. Mr. Edwards, an eminent Presbyterian, made and published a collection of examples to this purpose, and added his own censure of the persons concerned, in the following terms: “There never was a more hypocritical, false, dissembling, cunning generation in England, than many of the grandees of our sectaries.—They encourage, protect, and cry up for saints, sons of Belial, and the vilest of men.” Edwards’s Gangræna,
part

part p. iii. 240 [b]. And again, p. 87. "Yea, says he, when for
" their seditious, tumultuous, libellous, scoffing, wicked, lying,
" scandalous reports, books, and practices, they have been questi-
" oned, there is nothing in their mouths but persecution." Mr.
Neal has thought fit in his third vol. of the History of Puritans,
p. 370, to speak slightly of this author, "and of our church-
" writers, for reporting the state of religion in those times from
" his writings." Let us then have recourse to the noted Mr. Baxter,
whom Mr. Neal often quotes, and with great approbation. "Did
" we ever think, says Mr. Baxter [i], when we were reproached
" by the enemies, as having our party composed of Anabaptists,
" and Separatists, that so many of them would have proved so much
" worse?—Is it this that our eyes must behold instead of our so
" much desired and hoped for reformation? Oh what heart is so
" hard in any true Christian's breast, that doth not rend and re-
" lent to think of the doleful case of England! How many thou-
" sand professors of religion are quite ruined in their souls, and
" turned into monsters, rather than saints!" And in the same
book, p. 147. "What shall I tell you, says he, of all those hide-
" ous pamphlets against ordinances, and for the mortality of the
" soul, and that the soul is God himself, and against the truth of
" the Scripture, and downright familism, and libertinism, and
" paganism!—I cannot but think how men cried out against
" Mr. Edwards his Gangræna, at first, as if he had spoken no-
" thing but lyes, and now they have justified it with a fearful over-
" plus." Such was the language of the Presbyterians concern-
ing the sectaries of those times.

On the other hand, they were not wanting to reproach the
Presbyterians with equal bitterness. The Independents say, "The
" national covenant is a double-faced covenant, the greatest make-
" bate and snare, that ever the devil, and the clergy his agents,
" cast in among honest men in our age." Edwards's Gangr. part
iii. pag. 220. "The Presbyterian government is anti-christian,

[b] London 1646.

[i] In his Plain Scripture-Proof of Infants Church-Membership, &c. p. 149, 4to,
Lond. 1646.

" tyrannical,

“ tyrannical, lordly, cruel, a worse bondage than under prelates, “ a bondage under task-masters, as the Israelites in Egypt.” Gangr. part iii. p. 221. “ The assembly is Anti-christian, Romish, “ bloody, the plagues and pests of the kingdom.” Gangr. part iii. p. 230. After so much discord, one would have hardly thought it possible for them to have united any more: But, upon the restoration, all these differences were soon forgotten, and they acted amicably in concert again, to carry on their work of opposing the church of England: They do so at present, and while they have such an adversary before them, it is probable they always will.

AND these their united efforts against the church will be likely to have the greater success, in regard that the dissenters may gain such an interest in the corporate and other burghs, which send members to the parliament, as may give them a weight in the legislature, much more than in strict proportion to their numbers and their wealth. Both these indeed, according to their own accounts, are very considerable. A late writer [i] on their side says, “ The number of the Protestant dissenters, (by whom he seems to mean only the dissenters of the three denominations) “ is at “ the lowest calculation much above 700,000, and their wealth “ in land, &c. amounts to near fifteen millions.” I fancy this person used multiplying glasses in his computation of their strength: But whatever it be, it is undoubtedly a circumstance of great advantage, towards the exerting it with effect, which another of their writers has observed, and, I believe, with truth, to wit [k], “ That the dissenters being for the most part engaged in the “ trade of the kingdom, both as merchants and manufacturers, “ must necessarily create a great dependence upon them.” The same quantity of wealth engaged in trade, is, without all question, much more powerful than when vested in land; both because of the more frequent returns of it into the hands of the proprietors, and of the many opportunities it affords of setting people to work, assisting lower tradesmen with goods upon credit, and taking off

[i] Answer to the Dispute adjusted, p. 19. Lond. 1732.

[k] Inquiry into the Propriety of applying to Parliament, p. 7. Lond. 1732.

their

their manufactures. On these accounts the dissenters have certainly a great advantage towards forming an interest in the boroughs, of which many consist chiefly of men in business, who may be easily laid under obligations by the means I have mentioned. To trade mostly with them, as the dissenters are known to do one with another, and to give them credit a good while in their dealings, may sometimes be equivalent to no small sum of ready money, and yet may be done with ease by those who have large sums always passing through their hands. They may therefore gain a number of persons in the magistracy or government of corporations, and by degrees may introduce their own friends into those posts. And it is well known, that by being in the government of corporations, by having the disposal of their revenues, which in some of them are very considerable, by conferring their offices of trust and profit, with their other franchises and privileges, a very great interest may be formed towards getting members into parliament. This interest may be of no small weight, even in elections for some of the counties; but in many boroughs, it is so powerful, that hardly any other natural interest of country gentlemen can pretend to equal it.

INDEED, it is well known how much the interest which the gentry had in the boroughs has been diminished within forty years past. By their having been under the constant burden of a heavy land-tax all the last war, their estates are greatly impaired and encumbered; so that they have not been able to spend so much money as has been necessary for elections against those, who, paying little or nothing to the public, and getting vast estates by the funds, or by trade, have been in a condition to bear what expences they pleased, in order to be in parliament. But the case will be still worse, if the dissenters shall be able to bring themselves into the government of corporations, and thereby turn all the power they derive from thence likewise against the gentry. In that case, how difficult will it be for the latter to procure themselves seats in the house of commons? And unless they do this, how hard will it be for them to succeed in their pretensions to any places of honour and profit? I believe, indeed, that the crown,

and those of it's ministers who understand it's true interest, will always be disposed, if other things are equal, to favour the gentlemen of ancient families, whose brave ancestors have preserved the constitution. It is very hard they should, as in a course of years too many of them probably will, sink down into the dust, by the continual disadvantages under which they labour. To suffer this, as far as it can be hindered, would be wrong in policy, because the heads and other branches of ancient families, will have spirits agreeable to their generous blood, and if they be under perpetual pressures, the public at length must be very much incommoded by it. Whereas, if they be put into offices of trust and profit, they may from thence not only be made easier in their fortunes, but may most effectually serve the government, by the credit which an ancient and noble family reflects upon the post it fills. And they are in number much more than enow to afford a very copious choice of persons to serve the public in those posts that are fit for them. As on the other hand, for those places that are most proper for persons in the way of trade and business, there are also great numbers of reputable merchants, and others, of the church of England, entirely well-affected to the present settlement, out of whom the crown may be abundantly supplied with proper officers. I believe the ministers of state, by the numerous applications made to them on such accounts, know this to be true: Which, by the way, proves that there is no want of the dissenters, nor any expediency of employing them on that account.

BUT whether it be expedient to employ them, or not, will any one who knows the present state of things, imagine that they will not get into places, if by the means abovementioned they can get themselves into parliament? Let us only suppose a good number of them in the house of commons, and that they prove active, constantly attendant, well united, able speakers, and not uneasy in their private fortunes. What will they not think they have a right to claim? what may they not combine to gain? what may they not succeed in? Some persons who have been for the abolition of the test, have professed to think that it could have no other effect than to occasion the admission of the dissenters into offices of the inferior kind. I suppose they meant such

offices as a writer for the dissenters [l] specifies, in saying that
“ They are as willing and able as any to serve in the commissions
“ of taxes, peace, and lieutenancy, in the bench of aldermen and
“ assistants.” But this same writer is by no means contented with
posts of this kind. He puts in his claim to a share of all, even
the highest in the kingdom: For he adds [m], “ That they are
“ as willing to serve in the judicature, and offices of state, or in
“ commands at sea or land.” And soon after, he intimates “ that
“ it would not be to the dishonour of the government, to have a
“ dissenting general, or a dissenting statesman:” As to which, I
doubt not but most of his friends are of his opinion. And will it
be impossible they should gain such posts? Have we not had
examples in our history, of men of interest in parliament, who
have raised themselves into offices of that kind, without any real
favour from the crown? Was not this the case of [n] Mr. St.
John, of lord Say, and of others in the reign of Charles the First?
was it not the case of the [o] earl of Shaftesbury in the reign of
Charles the Second? and has it not been the case of many others
since those times? And whenever the dissenters should obtain any
of the chief posts, would not the interest and strength of their
party be proportionably increased? would not they be preferred
to all the under-places of trust, profit, or influence, in the dispo-
sal of their principals? would they not act with so much more
dignity and weight? would not the members, and especially the
ministers, of the established church, be proportionably discoun-
tenanced and discouraged? and must not these circumstances un-
dermine and cut away the ground of our church-establishment?

It has been represented as absurd, to apprehend that the es-
tablishment of the church of England, should ever come to be sub-
verted by the dissenters; because this must suppose them to gain
the whole legislature, the king, and the lords, as well as the com-
mons. But the reader will hardly fail to reflect, that the very

[l] An Essay upon the Interest of England, in respect to Protestants dissenting
from the established church. Lond. 1701, p. 19. [m] P. 21.

[n] Clarendon's History, vol. i. 8vo. p. 211.

[o] Temple's Mem. part iii.

same thing which is now talked of, as so impracticable, has been actually done in this kingdom, not a hundred years ago; and done by the power of those dissenters, who, a short time before, had as little appearance of being able to prevail upon the whole legislature, as their successors have at present. The circumstances now in favour of the latter, are not indeed quite the same as they were then; but they are of great weight: And I believe it will be allowed that the house of commons at present, is not of less moment in the balance of the constitution, than it was at that time; nor are critical conjunctures in our national affairs less likely to happen, when there is a pretender to the throne of these kingdoms; when France is much more formidable to us than it was at that time; and when, if but two lives should chance to fall, that crown would arrive to a degree of power, which hardly any thing in Europe would be capable of resisting. But even without taking this last case into our view, let any man of judgment but think on the posture our affairs may possibly be in, both abroad and at home, in the course of events for thirty or forty years to come. Let him suppose, that, upon the repeal of the corporation and test-acts, the dissenters should gain either a majority, or even a party of considerable weight in the house of commons; and when we consider the gentlemen of North-Britain, this will not appear to be very unlikely: Let him suppose that the concurrence of this party may be necessary to grant supplies, when they are more than ordinarily wanted, in times of any public hazard or distress; that divers of those members who are for the church of England, may be unattentive or disunited, while the dissenting party is vigilant, active, and resolute in pushing any points to the disadvantage of the church. These were really the circumstances in 1641 [p]; they may possibly, and even not improbably, upon the repeal of the corporation and test-acts, be the same again: And supposing they should be, will any one say that the church esta-

[p] In king Charles the First's time, lord Falkland was wont to say, "That they who hated the bishops, hated them worse than the devil; and that they who loved them, did not love them so well as their dinner." Clarend. Hist. book iii. p. 276.

blished should be in no danger? I will leave this point, without farther enlargement, to the impartial reader, who, I doubt not, must clearly see, that in such circumstances, the establishment of the church would be made to shake to it's very foundations; and without such extraordinary aid and support, from the crown, or the house of peers, as perhaps it will be difficult for either of them to give, must be borne upon, sink, and at length be overthrown.

Now would such a state of things be for the true interest of the nation? would it be desirable either to have no establishment, or one of a Presbyterian or Independent form? A late writer [q], who stiled himself a member of the house of commons, has let us know it is his opinion, that from nature, or the reason of things, it is difficult to shew that the clergy have any right to be maintained by the laity; or at least, he thinks it wrong [r] that any one should be obliged to support a parochial pastor, whom he never resorts to; which opinion visibly allows no right in the magistrate to provide, at the general charge of his subjects, for their general instruction, by persons whom he appoints; or in other words, represents it as unjust to make a public establishment of any religion. But this gentleman has the misfortune to differ from the wisest and best men in every age and country of the world, of whose sentiments and practice we have any account. By seriously considering the general state and dispositions of mankind, they found a necessity of having a competent number of persons, in every nation, peculiarly appointed for the study and administrations of religion; that so they might be fit to inculcate it on others, and preserve an influence on the minds of the people, that might answer the ends of civil government. One might easily shew with what care and regard such institutions were made, and kept up, in all the most celebrated nations of antiquity; and how much they contributed to the public welfare. But I will not spend time in doing this; because the expediency, and even necessity of such establishments of religion, is a thing so

[q] *Animadversions on a reverend Prelate's Remarks on the Tythe-Bill.* Lond. 1731, p. 12, 13, 14.

[r] Page 14.

evident in itself, to those who know mankind, that it has been confessed by several politicians, who were certainly not prejudiced in favour of the clergy of our own, or of any other country. Mr. Harrington [*s*], Mr. Nevil [*t*], and even Oliver Cromwell [*u*], declared their opinions, that there ought to be in every state, a national church, or a public leading in religion.

AND if there must be some establishment of religion, it is as certain that one in the episcopal way is both more agreeable to the practice of the primitive Christian church, and more suitable to the civil constitution of this realm, than any Presbyterian model could be.

Of the former of these points one may be easily satisfied, by consulting the writings of the fathers, and others, in the three first centuries after our Saviour. In some of these, written soon after the beginning of the second age, and in others that followed them all along downwards, there are passages very express to shew that they believed the order of bishops, as superior to that of presbyters, to have been instituted by the apostles themselves, and that accordingly, they laid a great stress upon it. The epistles of St. Ignatius, in particular, have been often quoted to this purpose, and proved to be genuine, with a force of evidence which our dissenters are unwilling to admit, but unable to contest with any shew of reason. These gentlemen indeed have affected to slight the authority of the fathers, in this point and others. One of their chiefs [*w*], not very long ago, went so far as to say, that “ We “ are properly the fathers, who stand on their shoulders, and “ have the advantage of seeing farther in several respects than “ they did.” But men of judgment and impartiality, will hardly allow that Dr. Manton, and his friends the dissenting divines, do quite so well deserve the title of fathers, as those venerable persons in antiquity, of whom, some were acquainted with the apostles

[*s*] See a Letter on Enthusiasm. Characteristicks, vol. i. p. 17.

[*t*] Plato Redivivus, &c. Lond. 1681, p. 184.

[*u*] Burnet's Hist. of his own Times, vol. i. p. 64.

[*w*] Memoirs of Dr. Manton, by William Harris. Lond. 1725. p. 68.

themselves,

themselves, others lived in the age immediately following; all passed their lives in great dangers or hardships for the sake of their religion, and several attested it's truth with their blood. It is not conceivable that in a matter of fact, so plain and public in it's nature, and which so many persons might be interested to examine, as that of church-government, the immediate, or very near successors of the apostles, should be so deceived, as not to know whether episcopacy was of apostolical institution, and of great importance to be retained in the church, or not. And if they could not but be sufficiently informed in this point, it is yet less conceivable that those, who laid down their lives for the Christian cause, should be willing to impose upon posterity in a matter so important, in which if they did not say the truth, so many persons living when their works were published, must have been able to contradict them. Had we no other grounds but these, for our adherence to episcopacy as, of apostolical institution, they would be sufficient.

BUT even from the holy Scriptures themselves, there are no small proofs to be drawn for this same point. In the epistles of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus, directions are given them with reference to their ordaining persons for the service of the church, and correcting them by admonition or other censures, as occasions might require. From the nature of which powers we may plainly see, that the persons who were invested with them, were not upon the foot of common presbyters, and much less upon that of our church-wardens and vestry-men, as the author of the [x] In-

[x] Numb. i. vol. ii. p. 426. "In the epistle to Titus, who it seems was another bishop, he is directed to set in order the things that were wanting; (the business among us, of church-wardens and vestry-men.)"

After shewing this contempt of a person ordained to the highest standing office in the church by the apostles themselves, it is no wonder that the same author gives such usage as he does to the modern clergy.

But in another place, indeed, he makes no scruple of treating the generality of mankind with as much disrespect as he does the clergy. Vol. i. p. 155, he says, "that by conversing with mankind, he had found that they generally consist of two sorts, learned parrots, and unlearned parrots; to the first whereof, absurdity is the peculiar privilege; and to the latter, ignorance." Such a mixture of humility and good-manners is not easily to be matched.

dependent

dependent Whig has, with scorn, represented Titus to have been; but that they were of an order, to which those who were under their jurisdiction could not then pretend to be, though otherwise they were commissioned to the general administrations of the Gospel. The dissenters alledge, that the title of bishop is applied in the Scripture to such persons as we call mere Presbyters now: And we grant that That word was then used in a larger sense than it is at present. But ought any one to conclude that therefore all those persons to whom that word was applied, must needs have been equal in every respect? The same word Baron is now applied to burgeses of the cinque-ports, to judges in the exchequer, and to peers of the realm; and must we therefore conclude that these are all equal in rank and dignity? If not, why should we think that all persons to whom the word Bishop is applied in Scripture, must have been so equal? And yet this is the main argument alledged by the dissenters for it; when on the other hand there are visible marks of a superiority of order and power, both in Timothy, and Titus, and the angels of the churches in the Revelation[y], over all the members of their respective churches.

It is a vain evasion which is used by the dissenters, in saying that Timothy, Titus, and others, were church-officers of an extraordinary kind, which was not designed to be continued in the church: For of this, no proof can be drawn from the holy Scriptures; and on the contrary, we find that the ancient writers speak of them as of bishops of the like order and power with those who succeeded them in the same sees; and they were evidently of the same kind with the bishops in the other parts of the church, who were then universally allowed to be superior to presbyters; and of whom, in that quality, says Grotius [z], “ we
“ have

[y] Rev. chap. ii, and iii.

[z] De Imperio Summarum Potestatum circa Sacra. Oper. tom. iv. p. 272.
 “ Aërii fanè hic error ab omni ecclesiâ damnatus est, quod diceret Presbyterum ab
 “ Episcopo nulla differentia discerni debere. Ipse Hieronymus ei qui scripserat, ni-
 “ hil interest inter Episcopum & Presbyterum, respondit, Hoc satis imperite; in
 “ portu, ut dicitur, naufragium.—Tertium hoc sit, Episcopatum initium habuisse
 “ apostolicis temporibus. Testantur hoc catalogi episcoporum, apud Irenæum,
 Eusebium,

“ have catalogues in Irenæus, Eusebius, Socrates, Theodorët, and
“ others. Now not to give credit to such great authors, in a
“ matter of history, one must have an irreverent and obstinate
“ mind.” Accordingly, that very excellent person, whose candour and judgment were equal to his learning, would have persuaded the remonstrants in Holland, about the year 1645 [a],
“ to appoint some bishops among them, and that these should
“ receive the laying on of hands from the Irish archbishop,
“ who was there at that time, and that when they were so ordained they should afterwards ordain other pastors.” From whence it appears, what the sentiments [b] of Grotius were, about the expediency at least, of having in that church a regular successive ordination, through the hands of bishops.

THE like or greater concern about it, we find in those pious confessors of Christ, the Protestants of Bohemia [c]; who were apprehensive that ordinations in which Presbyters, and not a bishop, should create another Presbyter, would not be lawful, and were in doubt how they should be able to maintain such an ordination,

“ Eusebium, Socratem, Theodoretum, atque alios, qui omnes incipiunt ab apostolicâ ætate. Tantis autem auctoribus fidem derogare, in re historica, non est nisi irreverentis & pertinacis animi.”

[a] See the testimonies concerning Hugo Grotius in Le Clerc's edition of Grotius on the Christian Religion, translated by Dr. John Clarke, p. 331.

[b] Mr. Samuel Chandler, in his second treatise on the Notes of the Church, p. 38, has been pleased to affirm, that “ the mission of bishops and prelates is in itself a trifling circumstance of little or no importance.” But one might shew that the ancient writers of the church, whose judgment in this point may surely weigh against Mr. Chandler's, express themselves very differently about it. I beg leave to recommend to this gentleman's consideration the following passage of St. Cyprian, whose abilities no one ever questioned, and whose integrity was approved by his laying down his life for the sake of the Gospel.—Having observed in his 33d epistle, (edit. Oxon.) that our blessed Saviour in making the settlement of his church, said to Peter—Upon this rock I will build my church, &c. he goes on thus, “ Inde per temporum & successionum vices, episcoporum ordinatio & ecclesiæ ratio decurrit; ut ecclesia super episcopos constituatur, & omnis actus ecclesiæ per eosdem præpositos gubernetur. Cum hoc itaque Divina Lege fundatum sit, miror quosdam, audaci temeritate, sic mihi scribere voluisse.”——

[c] Commenius in *Fratr. Bohem. Histor. sect. 59.* in *Direl of the Government of the Reformed Churches*, &c. p. 12, 13.

either to others, when they opposed, or to their own people, when they questioned it; and therefore they sent deputies to the remains of the ancient Waldenses, upon the confines of Moravia and Austria, by whose bishops these deputies were consecrated to the episcopal office, which they have ever since transmitted to their successors.

AND if some other foreign churches do not go so far as this, but are willing to defend the validity of their own Presbyterian ordinations, they, however, in doing it, lay no small stress upon the necessity they were under of taking this course, when they first made the reformation, “ I think, says Mr. Du Bosc [*d*], an eminent Protestant divine in France, in the year 1660, “ That not
 “ any of my brethren will condemn me, if I say, that well-or-
 “ dered episcopacy hath most important and considerable utili-
 “ ties, which cannot be found in the Presbyterian discipline. If
 “ we have followed the last, it is not for any aversion we have
 “ against the former:—But it is because necessity hath oblig-
 “ ed us to it; because reformation having been begun in this
 “ kingdom by the people, and by the inferior church-men, the
 “ places of bishops remained filled with men of a contrary reli-
 “ gion, so that we were constrained to content ourselves with
 “ ministers and elders as well as we could.—If bishops had
 “ embraced the reformation at first, I make no doubt but that
 “ their order had been maintained in the ecclesiastical polity.”
 Mr. Le Moyne [*e*], another Protestant divine in France, says,
 “ Truly, I believe not, that it is possible to keep either peace or
 “ order in your church, (of England) without preserving the epif-
 “ copal dignity. And I confess, that I conceive not by what spi-
 “ rit they are led, that oppose that government, and cry it down
 “ with such violence.” This same person having observed [*f*],
 “ that the bishops had been concerned in the reformation in Eng-
 “ land, and that in our churches there were lectures and praises.

[*d*] This translation was made from the French original, by Dr. Peter du Moulin, and is to be seen in Durel's Government of Foreign Churches, p. 122.

[*e*] Durel of the Government of the Reformed Churches, p. 127.

[*f*] Durel, p. 127.

“ of the pure truth, adds, that this ought to oblige all good
“ men not to separate from it, but to look upon the church of
“ England as a very orthodox church: Thus all the Protestants
“ of France do; those at Geneva, those of Switzerland, and Ger-
“ many, and those of Holland too; for they did themselves a
“ very great honour, in having some divines of England in their
“ synod of Dort, and shewed plainly that they had a profound
“ veneration for the church of England. And from whence does
“ it then come, that some Englishmen themselves, have so ill an
“ opinion of her at present, and divide rashly from her, as they
“ do? Is not this to divide from all the ancient churches, from
“ all the churches of the east, from all the Protestant churches,
“ which have always had a great respect for the purity of the
“ church of England [g]?” And to the same effect, Mr. de
l’Angle, another Protestant divine of note in France, has declared
his sentiments [h]. “ Since the church of England, says he, is a
“ true church of our Lord, since her worship and doctrines are pure,
“ and have nothing in them contrary to the word of God; and since
“ that when the reformation was there received, it was received to-
“ gether with episcopacy, and with the establishment of the liturgy
“ and ceremonies which are there in use to this day; it is with-
“ out doubt the duty of all the reformed of your realm, to keep
“ themselves inseparably united to the church. And those that
“ do not do this, upon pretence that they should desire more sim-
“ plicity in the ceremonies, and less of inequality among the
“ ministers, do certainly commit a very great sin: For schism is
“ the most formidable evil that can befall the church.” The au-
thorities that have been here alledged will, I hope, be of weight
towards supporting my assertion, that the government of a church
in the episcopal way, is agreeable to the practice of the primitive
Christians, and to the institution of the Apostles themselves,
whereas one in the Presbyterian way would not be so: And there-
fore an establishment in the former way ought to be preferred.

[g] In bishop Stillingfleet’s *Unreasonableness of Separation*, p. 407.

[h] In the same place, p. 421.

BUT this is not the only advantage that our present establishment has. It is, farther, the most suitable to the nature of our civil constitution. In this point we have the judgments of some of the ablest statesmen that we have ever had in England. "For the government of bishops, says the famous lord Bacon [i], for my part, not prejudging the proceedings of other churches, I do hold it to be warranted by the word of God, and by the practice of the ancient church in better times, and much more convenient for kingdoms, than a parity of ministers, and government by synods." And again in the same tract, "It is not possible, says he, in respect of the great sympathy between the state civil and the state ecclesiastical, to make so much alteration in the church, but that it would have a perilous operation on the kingdom." This great man does not clearly express the reasons why he thought a Presbyterian government in the church less convenient and suitable to the civil state than an episcopal one. But Sir Francis Walsingham speaks more plainly in his noted letter to Mr. Critoy. He observes, "that the Puritans, in their consistory and presbytery, opened to the people such a way to the government, as was no less prejudicial to the liberty of private persons, than to the sovereignty of the prince."

AND this was indeed more fully declared as the sense of Queen Elizabeth, by Sir John Puckering, who was afterwards lord-keeper of the great-seal, in a speech, by him made, in the house of peers, in the 28th year of her reign, of which the following passage is a part [k]. "You are especially commanded by her majesty, says he, that no ear be given, or time afforded, to the wearisome solicitations of those that be called Puritans, wherewith all the late parliaments have been exceedingly importuned: Which sort of persons, while that in the giddiness of their spirits they labour and strive to advance a new eldership, they do but hurt

[i] Considerations towards the better Pacification and Edification of the Church of England, in the 4th vol. of his works, folio, edit. Lond. 1730, p. 436.

[k] See a Short View of the late Troubles in England, in the reign of King Charles I. Oxford, 1681. Folio. p. 13.

“ the repose of the church and commonwealth, which is as well
“ grounded for the body of religion itself, and as well guided for
“ the discipline, as any realm that confesseth the truth. And the
“ same thing is made good to the world by many of the writ-
“ ings of godly and learned men, neither answered nor answer-
“ able by these new-fangled refiners. These men do both teach
“ and publish in their printed books, and teach in their conven-
“ ticles sundry opinions, not only dangerous to a well-settled
“ estate, and the policy of the realm, by putting a pike between
“ the clergy and the laity, but also much derogatory to her sacred
“ majesty and her crown; as well by the diminution of her an-
“ cient and lawful revenues, as by denying her highness’s prero-
“ gative and supremacy, and by offering peril to her majesty’s
“ safety in her own kingdoms.” We see here what were the sen-
timents of that wise Queen and her counsel, who will be allow-
ed, I think, to have understood at least the civil interests of this
kingdom.

AND much to the same purpose we have the judgments of
several foreigners, of eminent character, especially for their skill in
political affairs. I will lay no great stress upon Mr. de Montmo-
rency, constable of France [1], who said, “ that if the Calvinists
“ in that kingdom should at length obtain the liberty they pre-
“ tended to, the monarchy would degenerate into a democracy.”
For as this minister was a papist, his sentiments may on that ac-
count have the less weight. But the same objection does not lie
against Philip de Mornay: That learned nobleman was not only
a Calvinist, but a principal support of their party in France. And
yet he could not but acknowledge [m], “ that though the Presby-
“ terian government might do well enough in popular states,
“ such as Geneva and Switzerland, yet, in kingdoms or monar-
“ chies, episcopal government was rather to be chosen.” And the
same opinion in much stronger terms, and with a particular view

[1] Varillas Histoire de Charles IX. p. 41. Si les Calvinistes obtenoient en fin la
liberté qu’ils pretendoient, la monarchie degeneroit du moins en democratie.

[m] See Dr. Du Moulin’s preface to his father’s book concerning the novelty of
popery.

to England, was professed by another foreigner, who understood politicks as well as most men of his time, and was both a good Protestant, and had great candour in matters of religion; I mean the celebrated Pufendorf, who expresses himself in the following words [n]: “ In this ‘respect likewise not a little blemish is
 “ thought to lie upon many of the Calvinists, as being too much
 “ inclined to affect democracies, and being on the contrary averse
 “ to monarchies, and forward to subvert them. The cause of
 “ which is well understood by men of skill: For those persons
 “ in France, in Switzerland, and in the United Provinces, who,
 “ in discarding popery, did at the same time throw off the au-
 “ thority of the Popish bishops, when they settled a new form of
 “ government in their church, agreed upon one of a democratical
 “ kind, in which all the ministers were upon an equal foot, and
 “ for the management of their church affairs, had elders and
 “ deacons joined with them from amongst the people. Now
 “ when they were once admitted to a vote in ecclesiastical matters,
 “ the next step was for them to have a notion that it was unjust
 “ that a whole state should be governed at the will of one single
 “ person. Men of prudence judge that those troubles, with which
 “ England was some years ago most miserably afflicted, were not
 “ a little fomented by the Geneva doctrines, which the Eng-
 “ lish youth that studied in that place, either learned there, or

[n] Dissert. Academ. Lond. Scan. 1675. p. 580.

Hac quoque parte non parum labis adhærere multis Calvinianorum judicatur, dum in democratiam nimio amore propendent, & contrâ, monarchias averſantur ad easque convellendas sunt proclives. Ejus rei causa quidem peritis non obscura est: Qui enim per Galliam, Helvetiam, atque Belgium, simul cum pontificiâ religione, auctoritatem pontificiorum episcoporum ejuraverant, cum novam ecclesiæ administrationem instituerant, in democraticam regiminis formam consenserunt; in quâ & ministri omnes inter se essent æquales, & ad conventus ecclesiasticos seniores quoque & diaconi è plebe adſciscerentur. Cum autem semel in rebus sacris plebs ad suffragium admitteretur, proximum fuit ut crederent iniquum esse totam civitatem Unius Hominis voluntate regi.—Judicant prudentes ad turbas istas, quæ superioribus annis Angliam miserrimè exercuerunt, non parum contulisse dogmata Genevensia, quæ juvenus Anglicana ibidem studiis operata aut ex eorum scriptis hauserat & in patriam suam disseminaverat, &c.

“ out of the writings that came from thence, and dispersed those
“ notions into their own country.”

IN this last quotation, when Pufendorf says that the Calvinists are too much inclined to democracies, he is not to be understood as if he represented all of that sect as being at all times thus disposed: For no doubt, while the kings under whom they live encourage and favour them, they may so long be well enough pleased with their government, and willing to support it. The baron's meaning I take to have been, that the popular forms of their church-government, have a natural tendency to raise dispositions, which, when either they are soured by unfavourable treatment, or not enough sweeten'd by personal interest under monarchies, are apt to lean much towards popular schemes. And of this tendency, indeed, among the independents, and other sectaries, the Presbyterians themselves in 1645, appear to have been sensible: For the London clergy, in a letter written by them in that year from Sion-College, to the assembly of divines at Westminster, say, “ It is much to be doubted, lest the power of the magistrate
“ should not only be weakened, but utterly overthrown, consider-
“ ing the principles and practices of the independents, together
“ with their compliance with other sects, sufficiently known to
“ be anti-magistratical.” But might not the independents have retorted this charge upon the Presbyterians, not only by putting them in mind of the part they had acted against the crown for several years past, but also by quoting the declared sentiments of their great leader Mr. Cartwright, who says [o], “ that the world
“ is now deceived, that thinketh that the church must be framed
“ according to the commonwealth, and the church-government
“ according to the civil government; which is as much as to say,
“ that a man should fashion his house according to his hangings:
“ Whereas indeed it is clean contrary, that as the hangings are
“ made fit for the house, so the commonwealth must be made to
“ agree with the church, and the government thereof with her
“ government.—Otherwise God is made to give place to men.”

[o] Defence of the Admonition, p. 181.

—Mr. Neal acknowledges [p], that the Puritans did not allow the church to be monarchical. If therefore the government of the state must (by divine right, as it seems) be suited to that of the church, the conclusion is evident, that the government of the state ought not to be monarchical. From this, and other considerations, which the passages that I have produced may suggest, the reader, I trust, will be apprized that an establishment of a Presbyterian form would but ill agree with our civil constitution: And from thence he will be farther led to see, that in views of policy, it would not be expedient that the vehement part of our dissenters should be admitted to a full capacity of offices, even supposing their admission could, at first, be gained with tranquillity and safety: Because their principles and dispositions would be thereby encouraged and spread; though not quite so much indeed as by an establishment, yet certainly more than would be desirable in the present circumstances of our nation.

BUT I must farther observe, as the point upon which this question chiefly turns, that such an admission of all dissenters to a free capacity of offices, by an abolition of the test, will not be likely, in the present state of things, to be made, or at least not long followed, with such tranquillity as some persons may imagine: On the contrary, it will be naturally productive of such animosities, contests, and disorders, as will be very dangerous to the welfare of the nation. How much soever the dissenting interest may increase by the means abovementioned, yet it will not easily come to be equal to that of the church. The members of the latter will, for many years, be as they are at present, much above the sectaries in number, as well as in quality, and estates. It is true, indeed, that all these nominal church-men are not to be relied upon for the support of the establishment: Because Infidelity has for some years past exceedingly increased, and, in consequence of it, a regard for the instituted parts of religion, and for the hierarchy in particular, is very much lessened in the minds of many: The numerous libels published of late, have had, in some measure, the

[p] Hist. Pur. vol. i. p. 133.

effect that was designed, of making men ill church-men, by making them regardless of several doctrines of importance in religion. A late writer [q] on the side of the dissenters, takes notice of this state of things, and does it in a very remarkable way. "The prevailing opinion of England, says he, "is Latitudinarian; and most men in the kingdom are so far improved in their judgments, as to believe that heaven is not entailed upon any particular opinions in religion, so as to sacrifice their liberties in defence of them." And another writer on the same side [r], after letting us know, "that the friends of the dissenters are seldom found among ministers of state, adds, that they are to be found among such gentlemen, as have unto good parts and knowledge, joined a freedom of thought and free enquiry into matters of religion." We are very sensible how far such freedom and latitude of thought are often carried in the present age: And can give some reasons why several of the great proficients in that way either are, or would seem to be, friends to the dissenters; but still we trust that a disregard to the principles of religion has neither yet made, nor will ever make, so great a progress as some persons think. We doubt not but much the greater part of the people of England will continue to believe in Jesus Christ: And that most of them, from a well-grounded persuasion that episcopacy was of apostolical institution, will preserve a suitable veneration for it: So that though they may be prejudiced against some particular prelates amongst us, yet they will not bear to see the order itself set at nought, and thrown out, to make way for the schemes of innovating spirits in modern times. They will rather think that the same order which at first propagated and settled Christianity in the world, will be the best bulwark against Infidelity and Popery at present.

AND even if this point should not be considered so much as it ought to be in views of religion, yet most of the considerable families in England will, in all probability, be for supporting our

[q] Letter to Mr. Holden, Lond. 1733, p. 26.

[r] The Interest of the Protestant Dissenters considered. Lond. 1732. 2d edit. pag. 18.

church-establishment, as the most agreeable to our civil constitution. Their own interest, join'd with that of the public, will induce them to it. Whatever dispositions there may have been formerly, in some of our noble and ancient families to support and encourage the dissenting party; there are few, I believe, at present, who are not sensible that the state of things is so much altered, as to require a suitable alteration in their conduct. For they see that the dissenters, very far from being under such hardships as they were in some parts of the reign of Charles II. have now all the liberty that can be desired in respect to promoting their spiritual welfare. Their profession and exercise of their religion are free and secure: They educate their children as they think fit; their teachers settle themselves where they will; and assemble together as often as they please, with all the proper synodical forms to consult and act as they find expedient. So that their case is no longer a matter of compassion. Their views at present are turned to the obtaining of power and influence, and the making themselves of weight in the state. But this increase of their secular interest has much less appearance of being for the service of the civil constitution, than it had for some years after the restoration: For then the humour of a great part of the nation ran strongly to exalt the prerogative of the crown, perhaps more than was really for the interest of the public. On which account some patriots of that time thought it right to promote the dissenting interest, as what would be a proper check and ballance against the immoderate growth of the prerogative. But at present those gentlemen, who know the true state and interest of their country, are sensible that there is no occasion for this method. There are other circumstances in the nation, sufficient and more than sufficient to weigh against the crown. In particular, they see that the royal prerogative is circumscribed and fixed by law, so that none of those stretches, that were formerly made of it on some occasions, can now have any place: That the supplies which are requisite for the maintenance of the forces by sea and land, depend upon annual grants by the parliament: And that even the revenues for the civil list expire, upon each demise of the crown: So that if,

at any time when they are to be regranted, the commons should be disposed, as they were for some time after the revolution [s], or should be wrought up to be yet more jealous of their liberties, and willing to increase them, those revenues might, in that case, be clogg'd with such conditions, as would make the power of the crown precarious: While, on the other hand, that of the people stands on a sure bottom, and must constantly increase; because the [t] property, the source of power, is vastly on their side against the crown, even though the nobility be added to it; and must come to be more so in length of time. All gentlemen of sense must be aware of the consequences which such a state of things will naturally produce: And, as one of it's effects already wrought, they see that the spirit of liberty runs with so strong a course through the mass of the people, that unless some very wise measures be taken, and constantly pursued to keep it in bounds, it must be degrees undermine and impair both the aristocratical and regal parts of our constitution. They know that these two parts, including in the former the landed gentry, have a natural connexion of interest with each other: That the clergy in such an establishment as ours, will be always, in some degree, dependent upon them: And both from that dependence, and from the manner of their education, will be disposed, as far as they are able, to act for their support, and for preserving the true ballance of our constitution: So that any advantages possessed by the clergy, that are not of disservice to their spiritual function, or the public good, are really so much strength to the gentry, the nobility, and the crown

[s] See Burnet's History of his own Times, vol. ii. p. 42, 43.

[t] Mr. Moyle, in his essay on the Roman Government, vol. i. p. 73. says, "That land is the true centre of power: And that the ballance of dominion changes with the ballance of property. This, adds he, is an eternal truth, confirmed by the experience of all ages and governments, and so fully demonstrated by the great Harrington in his Oceana, that it is as difficult to find out new arguments for it, as it is to resist the cogency of the old."

Mr. Nevil, in Plato Ridivivus, p. 141. affirms, "that the natural part of our government, which is power, is by the means of property in the hands of the people:" Which circumstance he said before, p. 37, "has made this country scarce governable by a monarchy."

itself. And therefore if these should make any unnecessary breaches on the clergy, they would in effect, cut through a bank, which the wisdom of their ancestors has raised for their defence, against that weight of the people, which the scripture compares to the many waters.

UPON these motives, therefore, of interest, or of conscience, or of both together, there is not much doubt but that the far greater part of the considerable families will be for supporting the establishment of the church. And great numbers of the middle and lower people have so inbred a veneration for that church in which they have been baptized, and brought up, and for that regal government under which this nation has so long flourished, and is at present so happy; that they will not easily be wrought off from their adherence to them. So that if, on the one hand, the several sects of the dissenters joined with the men of Latitude, and freedom of thought, and with those who are averse, or very indifferent to a regal government, do make an appearance of great force against the church of England; there will not be wanting, on the other side, a body of friends, united by principles of conscience, and by a regard to the true interest of their country, joined with their own, to act together as occasions may require, for the support of this establishment.

Now in these dispositions of the nation, I think, they who know mankind, will hardly avoid foreseeing, that, in case the test-act be repealed, there must great animosities and contests ensue: For the dissenters will, in all appearance, presently apply themselves to gain an interest in the corporate boroughs, and other towns, to be chosen into the government of them, to be put into the commissions of peace, and lieutenancy, and all other posts of trust, profit, or influence, that may be within their reach: And probably, by supporting one another in their applications for these places, or enforcing it by the joint weight of their whole body, when 'tis necessary, they must often succeed in their pretensions. For we may judge what their manner of applying will be, from what has been already said, by one who writes with an air of importance among them, and hath thought fit to give the world the history

history of their consultations and proceedings, in order to procure the abolition of the test [u]. This gentleman having intimated that the application of the dissenters in Ireland for the repeal of the test-act there, ought to have been enforced with the whole weight of the dissenters in England; and having complained that that affair which had been promised by a very great man, as an earnest of future favours to the dissenters in England, had shamefully miscarried; expresses his resentment in the following terms: "Are the dissenters, says he, to be thus treated, in the face of an election?"

---*Manifesta Fides, Danaümque patefcunt
Infidiae.*---

Virg. lib. ii. 309.

The reader will easily understand who is here accused of breach of faith, and who are reckoned insidious enemies to the dissenters: He will perceive, by the favours said to be promised in the plural number, that the bare repeal of these acts in question will hardly content them; and he will observe what their manner of application will be, to gain any advantages they think themselves entitled to: Whenever their assistance is wanted by the crown, they will expect to be proportionably considered.

AND will dispositions or attempts of this kind, on the part of the dissenters, to enlarge their interest and power, raise no concern at all in the members of the church of England? will these be in no degree solicitous to maintain their ground? will the members of the boroughs and other corporations, be contented that dissenting ministers [w] at London, should direct them in the choice of the members of their bodies, and their representatives in parliament? will the ancient gentry, whose families have always

[u] An Impartial Account of the late Transactions of the Dissenters. Lond. 1734, p. 25, 26.

[w] "There is a minister in London, to whom the town of Berwick has, upon every new choice, applied for his direction or assistance, above one and twenty years, and without whose influence, the present members had never been so much as named amongst them." Remarks upon a Paper entitled a Letter to Protestant Dissenters. Lond. 1732, p. 17.

had a natural interest in the boroughs, be easy in seeing it undermined, and in a way of being reduced to little or nothing? will they negligently suffer a new set of people to come in upon them, and cross their pretensions to every post of trust and profit? will they be easy in seeing that church which their ancestors have endowed and protected, which all the foreign churches so greatly respect, and which the arguments of the dissenters have been unable to hurt, borne down by the growth of their secular interest? will they not endeavour to form opposite interests [x], and take proper methods to prevent these inroads? and must not these measures produce animosities, violent enmities, and their dire effects? may they not give opportunities, which persons, disaffected to the government, will improve to its disadvantage? may no foreign enemies find their account in them? I think, any one who knows mankind, and the present state of our parties and dispositions in England, must see that these consequences would be likely to follow upon a repeal of the test-act. Clouds, much less than these appear to be in prospect, have sometimes bred storms which have torn up governments by the roots.

Now if these be the natural effects of such an alteration; if there be just reason to believe that it will produce confusion, and danger, or great disadvantage to the state; then the vehement dissenters, from whom this danger is likely to arise, may justly be excluded by any fit means, from having offices that will give them too much power and influence in the state: For whatever rights or advantages any one may be entitled to as a good subject of the civil government, they must all be submitted to considerations of the public welfare. Whenever this requires it should be done, they may justly be abridged, in any degree which is necessary to it. For unless such a course was taken, it would be impossible in many cases for civil societies to subsist: And therefore acquies-

[x] "Can any one think that the bigotted and self-interested clergy, who, like harpies, are watching all opportunities, will not seize the occasion to trumpet their seditious alarms, and endeavour again to spread false notions of the church's danger? *Reflections on the Corporation and Test-Acts.*" Lond. 1732, p. 23.

cence in this point is always a condition, upon which men are members of such societies. Upon this ground was made that act of parliament 8 Henry VI. chap. 7. which appointed the qualifications of those who should have a right to vote in the elections of knights of the shires. By this act that right is allowed only to such persons as are possessed of 40*s.* a year of freehold lands or tenements; whereas before that time [y], all the freemen of the county had a right to vote in that case. But because, as the preamble to the act expresses it, “ the late elections had been made by very
“ great, outrageous, and excessive numbers of people dwelling
“ within the same counties of the realm of England, of the
“ which most part was of people of small substance, and of no
“ value, whereof every of them pretended a voice equivalent, as
“ to such elections to be made, with the most worthy knights
“ and esquires dwelling within the same counties; whereby
“ man-slaughters, riots, batteries, and divisions among gentle-
“ men, and others of the said counties, shall and may likely rise
“ and be, unless convenient remedy be had and provided in that
“ behalf:” Therefore the said qualification is fixed: That is to say, in order to guard against a mere probability of some danger to come, the right of voting was at once taken away from the far greater part of the people of England.

SOME writers have been willing to account for the justice of this act, from the consideration that men under 40*s. per ann.* having as it were no property in land, ought not therefore to have any vote for one to appear in parliament on their behalf. But this circumstance is plainly insufficient to account for the equity of this procedure. For such persons may sometimes have a very large property in copyhold and leasehold lands, in monies, in stocks of goods, and the like. At least they had the liberties of their persons, and other rights, as free-born Englishmen; which are certainly things of value, and may be affected by what is done in the parliament: And therefore in regard to these, they might

[y] “ Hitherto any man of English blood promiscuously had a right to give or receive a vote.”—Nath. Bacon’s Historical and Political Discourse of the Laws and Government of England.” Continuation, p. 77.

justly claim a vote in the choice of their representatives. No other principle will account for their being deprived of this right, but only the above-mentioned consideration of the public danger by their having it. Upon a foundation of the same nature was made another law in the reign of Queen Anne [z], which limited the capacity of sitting in parliament, as representatives for the counties, to those persons who have an estate, freehold or copyhold, for their own lives at least, of the annual value of 600l. and the right of sitting as burgeses, to those who have an estate of the like kind, of the annual value of 300l. each of which estates must be above reprises. This was done in order to prevent needy men, who might be likely to be corrupted, from having a share in the legislature, and to vest that great trust in those who have competent estates. The act is still in force; and is allowed to be reasonable, though probably it affects a number of persons of very good characters, and ancient families, who might, otherwise, be both willing and able to serve their country in this way. These gentlemen, however, do not clamour at their being made incapable of that honourable trust, nor do those great numbers of the people of England who are deprived of their right of voting for the knights of the shires, express any uneasiness on that account. Now if such abridgments may be made of civil rights, in order to guard against probable dangers, in these cases, why may not the same course be taken on the like account, in the case of vehement dissenters from the church of England? The danger of mischief to the state, from their being admitted to a free capacity of all public offices, would be at least as great, as from the capacity of men of less than 600l. a year to be knights of the shires; or from the admission of men of less than 40s. a year freehold to vote in elections. There have been instances in the world, when men of small private fortunes have made good senators.

“ *Privatus illis census erat brevis,*

“ *Commune magnum.*

“ Their private wealth was small, the public great:”

[z] 9 of Q. Ann, chap. v.

says

says Horace [a], of some of the Roman senators in the best times of that republic. There have been many instances when great numbers of people have met very quietly at elections. But I do not remember any case, in which one part of a nation being of a different religion from the other, and having a fair prospect of making their religion the superior one, were not disposed to endeavour it; nor can I think there will ever be such an instance, while the general dispositions of mankind continue to be as they are. For though our dissenters have a turn of mind, in some respects peculiar to themselves, yet in this point they would be like other men: So that the laws, which guard against such dispositions on their part towards the established church, are, at least, as justly founded as those other laws, of which no man complains. If, therefore, the corporation and test-acts be unjust, and, as such, ought to be repealed, then the other two acts must, upon the same principle, be repealed likewise; and all the free-men of England, without any distinction, must be restored to their original right of voting, and of being capable to be chosen, for knights of the shires. But if, without admitting this, the justice of our present laws relating to elections can be maintained; then it must, by a parity of reason, be acknowledged, that the dissenters, as being ill-affected to the church, and from thence likely to occasion disturbance and danger to the state, may have their capacity of public offices justly restrained by the laws that require the sacramental test.

To a general reasoning of the kind here used, some persons have objected, that by the same way of arguing, these two things may be proved: First, that the greatest violences and barbarities possible may in several cases be justly practised against men on account of their religion. And, Secondly, that such violences may, with full as much reason, be acted by men of a false religion, against those of a true one, by heathens, for instance, against Christians, as by the latter against the former. Both these consequen-

[a] Carm. Lib. ii. Ode. xv.

ces are absurd: And therefore the doctrine, from which they are justly deduced, must be false.

BUT to the former of these objections I beg leave to answer; That, upon our principle, no violence at all can be justly practised against any man, on account of his religion, merely as such; but only as this religion, either actually does, or, in all appearance, will incite him to use violence on his part, in order to deprive his fellow-subjects of rights annexed to their religion by the laws of their country. If, therefore, the objectors mean to represent us as maintaining that such violent courses as have been mentioned, may lawfully be taken against dissenters from an established church, without supposing that these dissenters actually use, or design to use, proportionable violences on their part against the establishment; they then draw a false consequence from our principle; which will warrant only such a self-defence as is necessary, with regard to the dispositions and powers of the opponents. If they are peaceably disposed, or not much likely to make disturbances, by forcibly attacking the established religion, then, against them, violent methods will not be necessary, and therefore will not be justifiable. But if the objectors will make the supposition, that the enemies of an established religion break out into rage, and tumult, and open force; or even give unquestionable evidence that they design to do so: Then, I make no difficulty of avowing that those rough methods, which they themselves make necessary, may be justly used against them. For the rights which the subjects of an established religion have, in virtue of this establishment, are upon the same foot as any others of their civil rights, and may justly be defended by the very same methods. This no one can deny, unless he holds it to be wrong in the civil magistrate, to grant such temporal advantages, to the professors of any particular religion, as are implied in the notion of an establishment: For instance, to provide them places of worship; to maintain, at the public charge, the persons who officiate in their religion; and the like. If any one conceives that every thing of this kind is unlawful, he must then indeed dislike our putting the rights which thus accrue to any religion, upon the same bottom with other rights of a civil nature.

nature. But as few persons, I believe, will openly avow this to be their opinion; as, on the contrary, it will be generally granted, and is evident in itself, that the magistrate may lawfully give such advantages to a religion: It must from hence plainly follow, that as long as his laws to this purpose are in force, the rights, which the professors of a religion so favoured derive from those laws, may, and ought to be considered as standing on the same ground with other civil rights, and therefore may justly be defended by the same methods. Thus when the Anabaptists at [b] Munster, from a mixture of enthusiasm and villany, attacked the established religion and government with open violence, it was undoubtedly lawful to use force against them: And it was as lawful to do the same against Venner, and the other fifth-monarchists in England, notwithstanding they declared that they were led by God to what they did[c].

Not that I would here be understood, as if I justified the use of such tortures, in any case of this kind, as are employed by the Romish inquisition, against hereticks and others accounted enemies of their established church. For though some persons have been pleased to affirm, that this is a necessary consequence of our principle, and have thereupon made sad lamentations, to move the tender-hearted part of mankind; yet, in reality, these terrors are only the products of their own imaginations, and have no just connexion with what we maintain. Our doctrine, as I have said, will justify only those measures of force that are needful for a reasonable self-defence: But such tortures cannot ever be needful for that purpose; and therefore they cannot justly be employed.

To make this appear, I would ask the objectors, what course they think might justly have been taken, if the English Papists in the reign of king James the Second had risen in arms, and declared that they had no intentions to hurt the civil government, which they greatly approved, but only to subvert the undue establishment

[b] See Sleidan's Hist. of the Reformation, translated by E. Bohun, Esq; Lond. 1689. book x. p. 190.

[c] Echard's History of England, vol. iii. p. 43.

of the Protestant religion? I believe the objectors will allow that all needful degrees of force might have been justly employed, in order to subdue them: That if they had made resistance, they might have been killed; and if they had been taken prisoners, they might have been punished, either with death, or with exile, or imprisonment, as would have been most expedient for the public welfare. But the question that I would ask, is, whether they might, in this case, have been justly tortured, after the manner practised by the Popish inquisition? I presume our objectors will answer in the negative: And their reason will be, that such tortures could not have been needful, either to the safety of the public, or to that of private persons; and therefore they could not have been justly used. Now this very thing we can full as well say with regard to any other opponents of our establishment, to whatever extremities they proceed. For our principle will have no farther consequences against such opponents, than the principle held by the objectors will have against the Papists, in any case like that which has been mentioned. So that we are, in reality, no more chargeable with the cruelty of such consequences, than the objectors are themselves: Which I humbly desire some gentlemen to remember, when they think of declaiming next upon this subject.

IN answer to the second objection abovementioned, I will not allow that all establishments are equally rightful in themselves. For in truth, and with respect to God, no person or state can have a right to protect or encourage falsehood, or use any influencing method against the truth. A prince who maintains the teachers of Mahomedism, or Popery, is unjustifiable in so doing; and will be accountable for his conduct to God, the great searcher of hearts, hereafter. But I do allow, that when a false religion is actually established, it is upon the same foot as if it was true, with regard to men: That is to say, the professors of a true religion have no right to use any forcible or illegal methods to overthrow the false one. For the truth of a religion does not give it's professors any right to a civil establishment: Because, though it be the duty of all men to promote the true religion by all proper methods in their power;

power; and consequently the magistrate, in every society, is obliged to provide for the service of God, and the instruction of his people in a right way, that is, to establish the true religion; yet God has left it to the private judgment of the magistrate, as well as to that of every other person, to determine for himself which is the true religion: No other man hath a right to make the magistrate submit to his judgment in this point: And therefore, supposing the magistrate errs, and establishes a false religion, he will indeed be accountable to God for that wrong judgment, but he is not accountable to men; nor can they have a right to demand that he should make a civil establishment in favour of that religion which he disapproves. For civil emoluments, are, by the constitution of all societies, entrusted to the disposal of the supreme magistrate, who has a right to judge upon what persons they may, most fitly, be bestowed: And his judgment, though it should be wrong, yet ought to be submitted to by all private members of the society, so far, as that they ought not to use any illegal or violent methods to oppose it: Which if Christians should do, they may be as justly punished by an heathen or Mahomedan magistrate, as private subjects of these latter persuasions might be punished for the like proceedings, in a country where the Christian religion is established. In this respect, I grant that all established religions, whether they be true or false, are upon an equal foot: And this concession I do not take to be at all absurd, or of any weight against our reasoning, but to be founded upon the visible necessity there is for civil government, in order to the welfare of mankind.

THIS government could not long subsist, if any persons, under pretence that their religion, as being the true one, ought to be established, had a right to oppose, and endeavour by forcible methods to subvert the establishment, already made by the public authority. This must be a source of perpetual confusions; which God cannot be supposed to allow. And therefore the supreme magistrate, in order to the maintenance of peace in the society, must have a right to oblige all persons to acquiesce under his establishment,

blishment, and be contented with a safe profession and exercise of their own religion, though without any civil emoluments annexed.

SUCH profession and exercise, indeed, ought to be allowed to all persons who are of a religion, that will be consistent with the welfare of the civil state; or will not put them upon disturbing it. Because every man hath a natural right to judge for himself in matters of religion, and to practise accordingly. That right, if it were always duly and peaceably exerted, could never hurt any civil state: And therefore it ought not to be taken away, or in any wise abridged, supposing it is probable that it will be so exerted. But whenever it is in fact, or in all appearance will be, used in such a way as to disturb the civil government, which is absolutely necessary to the welfare of mankind, and therefore must in all events be supported; then, even that right of professing and exercising such a religion is so far forfeited, and may be restrained, by all the methods that are necessary to this purpose.

UPON this ground our laws against the Papists are made, and may very well be justified. Their religion is inconsistent with the welfare of our civil government; and therefore some penalties are laid upon the exercise of it, and much greater on those who are perverted to it [d].

THE case of Protestant dissenters from our church is indeed very different. They are well affected to the civil state, considered by itself: And may practise their religion, without any disadvantage to it. They ought therefore to be, as they are, allowed a free profession and exercise of it. But as their affection to the civil state, is joined with a settled ill-will to the church; as there is a very great probability that if they were admitted, without any restraint, to public offices of trust and profit, they would be as able, as they would be willing, to hurt that establishment of the church, which is very conducive to the interest of the state; and as their attempts, or known dispositions of this kind, would occasion animosities, contests, and disturbances among the people: From all these premises, the consequence is plain, that, out of a due regard and

[d] 23 Eliz. 1 Par. 2, 3, 4.

concern for the public welfare, the vehement dissenters may justly be restrained by any fit means, from taking offices in the state. This is the first of the general points that I proposed to make appear.

THE other point with which I am concerned, is to shew, that the present method, in which this restraint is laid upon dissenters, by obliging all men who take offices, to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper, according to the usage of the church of England, is also lawful. The objections against this method are, That it perverts the design of this sacred institution, and occasions much wickedness in unworthy receivers. In answer to which, I first observe, that our laws apparently mean to require that this Sacrament should be at all times received in commemoration of Christ's death, and with sentiments of heart becoming that remembrance. For they require it should be received as our church enjoins; whose declaration to this purpose in her liturgy, is, with all the other parts of that service, confirmed by the act of Uniformity [e]. This act, which is now in force, was so likewise at the time when the test-act passed. And as subsequent laws must be designed to agree, in their meaning and intent, with all those precedent ones that are unrepealed; the test-act therefore in requiring that all persons who take public offices, should receive the communion according to the usage of the church of England, must be supposed to require that they should do it with such dispositions of heart as the church expects from them. Now the minister who notifies the time of a communion, is directed to acquaint the congregation, " that he purposes to administer to all such as shall
" be religiously and devoutly disposed, the most comfortable sa-
" crament of the body and blood of Christ, to be by them re-
" ceived in remembrance of his meritorious cross and passion,
" whereby alone we obtain remission of our sins, and are made
" partakers of the kingdom of heaven.—He is to exhort them
" in the mean season, to consider the dignity of this holy mystery,
" and the peril of unworthy receiving thereof: And so to search

[e] 13, 14 Charles II. chap. iv.

“ and examine their own consciences, and that not lightly, and
 “ after the manner of dissemblers with God, but so that they may
 “ come holy and clean to such an heavenly feast. Therefore, says
 “ he, if any of you be a blasphemer of God, an hinderer or slan-
 “ derer of his word, an adulterer, or be in malice or envy, or in
 “ any other grievous crime; repent you of your sins, or else come
 “ not to that holy table.”—These passages shew how unjustly
 Mr. Chandler [*f*] has reproached our church “ with encourag-
 “ ing infidels, hereticks, and libertines into her communion” And
 as the meaning of the test-act ought to be considered as agreeing
 in this point, with that of the church; it is plain that this law
 cannot justly be charged with intending to require any thing con-
 trary to the nature or the end of the Sacrament.

NOR can it be, with truth, objected, that the act of receiving
 it on occasion of a civil or military office, does necessarily raise any
 contrary dispositions of mind. For it is evidently possible in the
 nature of the thing, that a man who communicates on such an
 account, may, notwithstanding this, piously remember the suffer-
 ings and death of our blessed Saviour on our behalf; may have
 suitable movements of gratitude for them; may form resolutions
 of obedience to his laws; and may, in particular, from thence be
 disposed to real affection for all mankind: Which dispositions our
 Lord designed should be excited or preserved, by this solemn act
 in remembrance of his death.

IF the objectors will not allow this to be possible, they must
 then maintain, that no man ever did receive the Sacrament wor-
 thily, when he did it on occasion of a public office. But this
 they will hardly presume to affirm. For if they reflect on the
 number, the quality, and characters of the persons who have re-
 ceived it on such occasions, they will, I believe, find reason to
 grant that some in this number have done it worthily. And sup-
 posing this granted, in the case of some persons, it follows that
 the legal obligation which men may be under to communicate at

[*f*] Vindication of a Passage of the Lord Bishop of London's second Pastoral
 Letter. Lond. 1734, p. 38.

a particular time, on a civil occasion, does not, necessarily, or in the nature of the thing, prevent any man from taking this sacrament at the same time, as he ought to do it in obedience to Christ: If this be true, then all men have it entirely in their power to communicate worthily, notwithstanding they do it, partly on a civil account: And admitting this, there is plainly no ground for saying "that the sacrament is turned from it's original design to a purpose against it's own nature and end." For though indeed the law obliges a man, if he takes an office, to communicate with the church of England, and from his so doing, makes a conclusion, which it applies to a civil purpose; yet, as his act of receiving the sacrament may, at the same time, effectually serve all those purposes of religion, for which it was at first intended, it is evident, that the sacrament is not, by the law, in any degree perverted or abused.

BUT the enemies of the test-act are loud in affirming, that, however possible it may be to communicate worthily upon taking an office, yet the contrary is often known to be done; and men are guilty of very great sins upon such occasions: Which sins, though indeed they are principally chargeable on themselves, yet are also to be justly charged on that act: For without such a law, there could be no such wickedness; and therefore the law is justly blameable, because it not only occasions sin, but lays men under temptations to it: Which practice is repugnant to Christian charity, and to those express passages of the holy Scriptures, that forbid us to lay stumbling-blocks, or occasions to fall, in the way of our brethren.

IN order to answer this objection, which has indeed a greater appearance of weight than any other that lies against the test; the first point to be determined is, whether all actions, which to other persons will be occasions or temptations to sin, are, on that account, unlawful? Our objectors will hardly maintain the affirmative, if they consider the practice of our Saviour and his apostles. For our Lord himself in going to festival entertainments, greatly offended the scrupulous Pharisees, and, in some sense, occasioned

A a

their

their sinning, as they did, by throwing unjust reproaches [g] upon him. Again, when he trusted what money he had to Judas Iscariot, he knew that the custody of it would tempt that ill-disposed man to be a thief, as he actually [b] was. And to mention a case that more nearly relates to the sacrament of the Lord's-supper: In the time of the apostles a feast of charity was joined to the communion, before or after it; in which the poorer sort of Christians were entertained at the expence of the more wealthy. This might very easily tempt some persons to come to the communion chiefly or wholly with a view to partake of the feast that went with it. We have reason to think it did so: For [i] some came hungry, others got to be drunk there. Now in the cases here mentioned, was the sin of the Pharisees, or that of Judas, chargeable, in any degree, upon our Saviour? Or were the love-feasts, on account of the ill effects they had upon vicious Christians, unlawful to be continued? The former of these questions needs no answer: And the latter may safely be answered in the negative. For, certainly, if the Apostle had judged that those feasts were unlawful, he would have suppressed them; which was not done: For we find that they were commonly used [k] in the church, for more than two hundred years after our Saviour. From these examples, and from the nature of the thing itself, it is sufficiently evident that an action may sometimes be innocent and right, notwithstanding that it leads other persons into sin. And yet I do also readily allow, that ill consequences of this nature may, in several cases, make actions unlawful that would not be so if those consequences were away.

Our farther enquiry, therefore, must be, in what cases an action innocent or indifferent in its own nature, becomes unlawful, by it's being, to others, an occasion of sin. Now I humbly conceive, that a general rule in this matter is, that such an action will be unlawful, whenever it is done without a sufficiently important cause on the part of the agent, so that it proceeds from a want of due cha-

[g] Luke vii. 34.

[b] John xii. 6.

[i] 1 Cor. xi. 21.

[k] See Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church, B. xv. chap. vii.

rity in him towards those whom his action will affect. Both reason and the Scripture agree in teaching us that men are not born for themselves only. We are strongly obliged to promote, as far as we are able, (morally speaking) the good of others, as well as our own. And the former of these, whenever it is of very great moment, ought to be pursued in preference to, and in some measure at the expence of, the latter; supposing that the damage or inconvenience that we shall suffer on that account will not be too grievous. Whoever is unwilling to give up, thus far, his own advantage, in order to prevent a very great mischief from coming upon others, especially a mischief of a spiritual nature, is wanting in the charity required by the Gospel: And an action repugnant to this great duty, must always be unlawful.

THIS case is the subject of the fourteenth chapter of the epistle to the Romans. Some scrupulous Christians were at that time in danger to be offended, or led into sin, by seeing others eat certain meats, which though they were indifferent in their own nature, and therefore innocently eatable by those who had no scruples about them, were, by the weak brethren, accounted unlawful. In this state of things, St. Paul, with regard to the ill effects that would be occasioned by eating those meats, determined that even the unscrupulous Christians were obliged to forbear them; and that to do otherwise would be a sin. The ground of which decision I take to have been, that as these persons could, without any great inconvenience to themselves, get other meats to subsist upon, it would therefore be a want of charity in them to eat this offensive kind of meats, and by so doing lead their weak brethren into sin. But let us suppose the case had been such, that the unscrupulous Christians could not have abstained from the offensive meats, without very great damage to themselves and to the public: For instance, that in a town closely besieged, no other but horseflesh, accounted unlawful by the weak Christians, had been procurable; and at the same time, the constitutions of the unscrupulous Christians, who were far the more in number, had been such as would have suffered extremely unless they were allowed to eat some kind of flesh. Would a hundred Christians of this latter

fort, have been obliged to abstain from eating that flesh, and so ruin their healths, of great moment to the public, merely to avoid offending a few such weak and ill-judging brethren? I think this will not easily be said, or at least not made good.

I WILL put another case to the same purpose, that may fall in more with common life. There is one who has somewhat of mine in his possession, which he thinks to be his own: And I know that his temper is so warm and obstinate, that he would be likely to defend his possession of this thing, by all the methods in his power, especially by taking iniquitous advantage of the forms of law: By doing which, against my just claim, he would probably be guilty of many sins. I grant that in such a case, as far as I only am concerned, I should be obliged to forbear, either suing at law, or taking any other method that would probably put this man upon sinning, for a matter of no great moment to myself. But will any one say, that I should be under the same obligation of forbearance, if an estate of great value and importance to me and to my family, were thus in question between us? Undoubtedly I should not. Because though charity may oblige me to prevent any hurt to my neighbour, as far as I can do it without great damage to myself; yet, when I must suffer much by so doing, a regard to myself then justly takes place of my concern for him. This is the determination of Grotius [1] in the case. “We cannot avoid all things, says he, that may occasion other men to sin: But those things we are obliged to avoid, which we are not put upon, either by necessity, or any advantage” (of considerable moment.)

AND if this rule holds in private cases, it may undoubtedly be followed in those that relate to the interest of the public. For, unless this were allowable, no civil societies could long subsist: Because hardly any regulations could be made for the public welfare, that might not prove occasions of sins to some persons or other. And therefore the interest of all such persons, unreasonably

[1] Annot. ad Rom. xiv. ver. 13. “Occasiones omnes alienorum lapsuum vitare non possumus; sed vitandæ sunt eæ, ad quas necessitate nulla aut utilitate impellimur.”

offended, especially of those who sin, not from error, but presumptuously against the clear light of their consciences, may justly be made to give way to the safety or interest of the public. Upon this principle divers of our laws are continued in force, which yet are known to be occasions or temptations to much wickedness. For instance, the laws which lay so high customs upon several commodities, occasion and tempt men to the practice of importing them in a clandestine way without paying the custom. The laws which oblige men to take oaths upon the entry of goods at the Custom-House, and in many other cases of the like nature, do often tempt them to perjuries; which would doubtless be prevented, in a great degree, if there were no such laws. But because the interest of the public requires them, they may very well be justified, as even our dissenters, I think, will allow. And by a most evident parity of reason, the corporation and test-acts may equally be justified, whatever ill consequences follow upon them, with regard to those who unworthily receive the Sacrament of the Lord's-supper, on account of offices in the state.

HOWEVER, I do very freely acknowledge that if any other method could be found out, not liable to these ill consequences, and equally effectual to secure the establishment of the church of England, from the attempts of those who are ill-disposed to it, our legislators would be obliged, in regard to the spiritual interest of some of our fellow-subjects, to prefer such a method to that of the sacramental test. And I believe that whenever such a method shall be proposed, it will readily be pursued by our superiors in the state, without any dislike on the part of those in the church. Indeed if we judge from the public acts, and well-known temper of most of her clergy, the disposition of the church of England towards the dissenters, appears to be truly moderate and Christian. She is very willing they should enjoy all that liberty of profession and worship which they think needful to their spiritual welfare. She heartily wishes they may use it so, as to find and embrace the truth in love: And if they do not, she commends them still to the mercy of God, and prays that he will not lay their schism to their charge. But with this Christian charity she has, as she ought

ought to have, a proper mixture of Christian prudence; so much as is needful to guard herself from suffering by their prejudices against her. She cannot but fear what might be, at proper conjunctures, the workings of such spirits, as can take offence at the colour and shape of a decent vestment, or at a posture of the body expressive of fitting humility and reverence in the worship of God. She has found by experience, that they who have strained at things of this sort, have made no scruple to swallow her revenues, and lay waste her sanctuaries. She only desires to be secured against such usage in the time to come: And to be maintained upon that bottom, which is necessary to prevent strife and confusion, and thereby to preserve to all parties a full and well-regulated liberty of religion. To this purpose, the wisest men of all ages have been sensible, that an establishment of some one religion is necessary: And the church of England having been planted from the beginnings of the reformation, and having hitherto brought forth much good fruit, to the honour of God, and the welfare of this kingdom; it is but reasonable she should keep her station. Accordingly, she trusts that all faithful members of her communion, however they may be otherwise distinguished into parties, will use their endeavours to support her in it; and she humbly hopes that the blessing of God will make them successful.

TRACT

TRACT IV.

On the Liberty recovered to the people of England, by suppressing the Authority formerly exercised over this realm by the bishop of Rome.

IN order to vindicate the right of private judgment, against the Romish claim of infallibility, and absolute authority in all matters of religion, the first of these tracts hath shewed, that the church of Rome maintains a gross error in her doctrine about transubstantiation in the eucharist, and is therein also guilty of a practice heinously sinful in her adoration of the host. These things alone, when required, as they were, to be believed and practised by every member of her communion, must have laid all good Christians under a necessity of making and continuing an absolute separation from it. But there are divers others of her practices now to be mentioned, by which this necessity is greatly enforced, viz. her doctrine and practice about the sacrifice in the mass, the eucharistical communion in one kind only, and the religious invocation and worship paid by her to angels and departed saints; all which we affirm to be wholly without ground in, and even manifestly contrary to, the holy Scriptures.

WITH regard to the first of these, the sacrifice in the mass, we, indeed, make no difficulty of allowing, that the eucharist may, in some sense, be called a sacrifice. This term is used by the sacred writers in a very large sense; they apply it, not only to the offering and consuming of beasts, and other material things, in the service of God, but to the faith of Christians, to their thanksgivings, to their alms; to the preservation of their bodies and minds in a state of purity, and the like intellectual and moral acts. There is no doubt, therefore, but that the commemoration of our Saviour's death upon the cross for our redemption, being accompanied, as it is, in the sacrament of the Lord's-supper, with the offering of bread and wine by the minister, and the consumption of them by him, and the other communicants, in humble acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God, and in gratitude for his goodness in our redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ, may be very justly termed a sacrifice. And if the church of Rome were to do

2
no

no more than this, we should have no dispute with her on this point; what we condemn is their offering up to God the sacramental substance, "as being the same real and natural body of Jesus Christ which suffered upon the cross [m], and their offering "that sacrifice as effectual with God for the pardon of sin." That this is the doctrine of the council of Trent, the following passages sufficiently prove. That council first declares, that in the sacrament of the eucharist, immediately after consecration, there exists the true body of our Lord, and his true blood under the species of bread and wine. And at another time it decrees [n], "that if any one shall deny that the body and blood, together "with the soul and the divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ are "contained in the eucharist truly, really, and substantially; and "shall say that they are there only as in a sign, a figure, or a virtue, let him be Anathema." Roger Hoveden [o] represents pope Urban II. as having said, that the hands of a priest "eo honoris et "dignitatis pervenisse, ut signo suo Deum creent qui creavit universa atque eum offerant Deo patri pro omnium hominum salute, "quod ipsis quoque angelis non licet." The catechism made for the use of the parish priests in the instruction of the people, adds, for further explanation, "that the true body of Christ, the very same that was born of the Virgin, and now sits in heaven at the right hand of the Father, is contained in the sacrament. Now of this same body of Christ, the council affirms that it is, by his command, to be offered up as a sacrifice by the priest in the eucharist: At the last supper [p], says the council of

[m] Verum Domini nostri corpus, verumque ejus sanguinem, sub panis et vini specie. Conc. Trid. sess. xiii. cap. iii.

[n] Siquis negaverit contineri vere, realiter, et substantialiter corpus et sanguinem una cum anima et divinitate Domini nostri Jesu Christi, sed dixerit esse tantummodo in eo, ut in signo, vel figura, vel virtute, Anathema sit.

[o] Part I. p. 268.

[p] In coenâ novissimâ quâ nocte tradebatur Christus, sacerdotem secundum ordinem Melchisedec se in æternum constitutum declarans, corpus et sanguinem suum, sub speciebus panis et vini Deo patri obtulit, et sub earundem rerum symbolis, Apostolis, quos tunc Novi Testamenti sacerdotes constituebat, ut sumerent tradidit, et iisdem & eorum in sacerdotio successoribus ut offerrent præcepit per hæc verba, Hoc facite, in meam commemorationem. Conc. Trid, Sess. xxii. cap. i. p. 198.

Trent,

Trent, in the night in which Jesus Christ was betrayed, he, declaring himself to be appointed a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, offered his own body and blood, under the species of bread and wine to God his father, and, under the symbols of the same things, delivered them to the apostles whom he then made priests of the New Testament, that they might take them, and commanded the said apostles and their successors to offer them by these words, "This do in remembrance of me." After such plain declarations as these, some learned men have, in vain, endeavoured to make this sacrifice in the church of Rome pass for being designed as no otherwise a sacrifice, than as it is a commemoration of the original sacrifice offered up upon the cross. It is evident, that the council of Trent supposes the natural body of our Saviour to be, though not killed afresh, yet, at least, to be offered up to God in every mass; and this, indeed, was avowed by the late bishop Bossuet of Meaux, who says, I am sensible that [p], if I have need that Jesus Christ should be my victim, it is necessary, in order to accomplish his sacrifice, that he present me this victim to eat, not only spiritual, but also as really and as substantially as it has been sacrificed; otherwise I should not be sensible that it is for me it has been sacrificed, and that it is completely mine. The same thing is still more clearly asserted by Mr. Hardouin, who says, that they [q], namely the Protestants, suppose that the word Sacrifice cannot be understood but either of the kill-

[p] Je sens que si j'ai besoin que Jesus Christ soit ma victime, il faut, pour accomplir son sacrifice, qu'il me presente cette victime à manger, non seulement en esprit, mais encore aussi reellement, aussi substantiellement, qu'elle a été immolée: Autrement je ne sentirois pas, que c'est pour moi qu'elle l'a été, et qu'elle est, tout à fait mienne. Sixieme Avert. vol. iv. p. 208.

[q] Ils, i. e. les Protestants, supposent ainsi, que le mot de Sacrifice ne peut entendre que de l'égorgement d'une victime, ou de la commemoration qu'on en pourroit faire dans une assemblée convoquée pour en entendre le recit, et pour voir la representation qu'on pourroit exposer aux yeux. Mais il y a icy un milieu: La victime une fois immolée sur la croix vient à la voix du prestre se cacher elle même sous les especes de pain et de vin, pour s'y offrir, et pour estre offerte à Dieu par le prestre; il n'y a point immolation nouvelle; mais ce n'est pas aussi un simple souvenir de l'immolation passée. Hardouin contre Courayer, tom ii. p. 86.

ing of the victim, or of the commemoration that is made of it, in an assembly called together to hear an account of it, and to see the representation made of it to their view. But there is a mean in this case: The victim which was once slain on the cross comes, at the voice of the priest, to hide itself under the species of bread and wine [r], in order to offer itself, and be offered to God by the priest: There is no new killing, but at the same time there is more than a bare remembrance of the killing that has formerly passed. This doctrine of Mr. Hardouin has lately been made public without any censure, or rather with marks of approbation, not only from his brethren the Jesuits, but from many others in the church of France: It is, therefore, beyond all exception, plain, that every one who receives the council of Trent, and joins in communion with the Romish church, is, according to her notion, obliged to believe that the very natural body and blood of Jesus Christ are offered up in sacrifice, in the mass; but since the doctrine of transubstantiation has been shewn to be false, it clearly follows, that this their practice of pretending to offer the real and natural body of Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice to God, is a practice for which they cannot have any just ground in the holy Scripture, or in reason, but much in both of them against it; consequently, it is an action of plain will-worship, of gross absurdity, and of heinous presumption, and, as such, must be very offensive to God.

It must be still more so, on account of that propitiatory virtue, which is ascribed to it by the church of Rome. The council of Trent, in chap. ix. of the sacrifice of the mass, Can. iii. declares,

[r] That this is the common belief of the Romanists, appears from the following passages of Mezeray's Abridg. This historian, speaking of St. Louis in Egypt, says, C'est une fable qu'il ait donné aux barbares une hostie consacrée pour gage de sa parole. Il se fust exposé mille fois à la mort, plutôt que de livrer son Dieu à ces impies. Abr. tom. i. p. 449. Le même tom. i. p. 456. Il arriva cette année, 1204, en un village près d'Orviete, qu'une hostie jeta du sang sur les corporaux pour convaincre l'incrédulité du prestre qui célébroit la messe. Le Pape Urbain, persuadé de cet miracle, institua la feste et procession du saint sacrement, pour être solennisée le Jeudi d'après l'octave de la Pentecoste. Saint Thomas de l'Aqui, qui estoit pour lors professeur en theologie à Orviete, en composa l'office.

" That

“That if any one shall say, that the sacrifice of the mass is only of praise and thanksgiving, or barely the commemoration of the sacrifice finished on the cross [s], but is not a propitiatory sacrifice, or that it profits only him that receives it, nor ought to be offered for the quick and the dead, for sins, for punishments and other necessities, let him be accursed.” The council here asserts, that the sacrifice of the mass is more than a bare commemoration of Christ’s sacrifice on the cross; it is propitiatory for sins, not only to those persons who receive the communion, but to other persons both living and dead. Now on what ground can it justly be affirmed, that this sacrifice can make a propitiation for sins? The Romanist, as well as all other Christians, agree, that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ himself on the cross, made a full and universal propitiation for the sins of all mankind, who act so, as to intitle themselves to the benefit of it. How then can there be any need, or any room for this other sacrifice of the mass to be at all propitiatory in regard to any sins? If the former was absolutely and universally effectual in the way of propitiation, the latter must be quite superfluous: It is, therefore, on this account, highly probable, that God instituted it not as a method of propitiation in any case; and, without his institution, it is certain, there cannot be any true means of propitiation for sins; for he, who only can pardon them, can only determine upon what terms, or in what method he will do it. Now he has nowhere declared in the holy Scriptures, that he has ordained any other sacrifice for this purpose, but that of Jesus Christ upon the cross: On the contrary, he has plainly made known that this sacrifice on the cross was to be the only means to that end; and farther, that this sacrifice was never to be repeated; for this is the main scope of the reasoning of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. He observes, chap. x. 11. that, *Every priest among the Jews stood daily ministering and of-*

[s] Si quis dixerit missæ sacrificium tantum esse laudis et gratiarum actionis, aut nudam commemorationem sacrificii in cruce peracti, non autem propitiatorium, vel soli prodesse sumenti, neque pro vivis et defunctis, pro peccatis, poenis, satisfactionibus, et aliis necessitatibus offerri debere, anathema sit.

fering oftentimes the same sacrifices which could never take away sins. But Christ, says he, ver. 14, by one offering hath perfected, for ever, them that are sanctified. He hath made so full an atonement and expiation for them, that there is no need of, nor does there remain, any more sacrifice for sin: But this man, ver. 12, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God. And ver. 10. We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Nothing can be said plainer than this, against the sacrifice of the mass, wherein Christ is often offered, and that, as properly and truly (the Romists pretend) as the Jewish sacrifices were, or as he himself was upon the cross. The argument of the apostle against the repetition of the Jewish sacrifices, proveth as strongly against the sacrifice in the mass, which, by the church of Rome, is no less frequently repeated.

BESIDES, that sacred author lays down a principle which shews that the Romish sacrifice in the mass cannot be truly propitiatory for sins; for he affirms, Heb. ix. 22, that without shedding of blood, *i. e.* without death, there is no remission of sins. Christ, therefore, once suffered death in his sacrifice of himself upon the cross. But in the Romish sacrifice, they do not pretend that Christ is again put to death, therefore their sacrifice cannot be truly propitiatory. The late bishop of Meaux, Bossuet, indeed, says, that Christ suffers mystically in the sacrament, (see his Expos.) But mystically suffering is far from being the same with really suffering death; which latter is necessary to propitiation for sins. See Disc. against Sacr. mass, p. 40, 41, and bishop Burnet's Exp. of 31st Article, &c.

OTHER performances in religion, indeed, and particularly the receiving the eucharist, may be, in a lower sense, called propitiatory; because when they are accompanied with proper dispositions of mind, they render God propitious to, or pleased with, us. But they do this only by their relation to, and by their virtue of, the only sacrifice of Christ on the cross, and not by any intrinsic virtue of their own. (Disc. p. 80.) And therefore they are not of themselves truly or properly propitiatory for sins: And therefore,

Tract IV. On the Liberty recovered to the People of England, &c. 189

fore, no more can the sacrifice in the eucharist be propitiatory for sins. It is, therefore, a great and dangerous abuse to represent it as being so, even to the communicants. But yet much more so, to suppose that other persons who know nothing of it's being celebrated, nor can, therefore, at the same time, exercise, on their own parts, any acts of contrition, repentance, faith, love, or the like towards God, should be benefited by it. To represent God as having vested such a power in a priest to propitiate for sins in such a way, is plainly inconsistent with, and unworthy of, the divine perfections; for which reason the church of England, in a just indignation against this doctrine, and the consequent practices, makes no scruple of calling it a blasphemous fable. Art. 31. And considering how apt weak and ill-judging persons are to rely upon such confident, though groundless, pretensions, and thereby neglect the right means of working out their own salvation, and so come to perish eternally; on this account, our church, with great reason, calls it a dangerous deceit, or imposition upon mankind.

It is, indeed, visible what motives the church of Rome has had, and still has for going into it; for this hath been one of the most effectual means of its keeping up wealth, and of maintaining great numbers of priests to say masses, and perform these supposed propitiatory sacrifices. But whatever temporal advantage the clergy make of it, the people can make none, but are in very great danger of relying so much upon these groundless and vain performances in the way of supposed propitiation for their sins, that they will, in the end, be for ever ruined; and the church is justly liable to severe condemnation for doing what she ought not, *for filth by lucre's sake* [t].

I HAVE hitherto considered the doctrine and practice of the church of Rome, only as she applies the sacrifice of the mass, in the way of propitiation for the sins of the living; she goes yet further, and supposes it effectual for relieving the pains of persons in a suffering state, by way of purgation after death, and for making satisfaction on their behalf; but as these considerations

[t] Tit. i. 11.

will be mentioned hereafter in the fifth tract, I shall leave them here, and proceed to the next thing of great moment, which renders the communion of the church of Rome unlawful; her denying to the laity, the consecrated wine in the sacrament of the eucharist, and obliging them to be contented with receiving only the bread. This practice, which is now universal in that church, is established by the council of Constance [*u*] upon pain of anathemas to those that oppose it; but how very unjust that sentence is, and how unlawful the practice itself, we shall find, if we consider the words and the design of this institution. Our Saviour, in giving the cup of wine to his apostles, said, *Drink ye ALL of this, for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins* [*w*]. To which St. Mark, xiv. 23 adds, that, *they ALL drank of it*. The design of our Lord, in this institution, was to exhibit a lively and affecting memorial of his sufferings and death for the redemption of mankind, and of his intimate union with them for the purposes of gracious assistance and consolation; with this view, by the symbols of bread broken into pieces, and wine of a red colour, he represents his own body as pierced, and his blood as separated from it, in order to denote the violence of his sufferings, which ended in his death: And to express the great interest we have in his passion, and the intire efficacy of that sacrifice with regard to us, he orders the symbols of his flesh and blood to be eaten and drank by us. In the Mosaic law, there were some sacrifices in which no part of the flesh was allowed to be eaten by any one. Of others, the priest only, not the people, was to eat a part: And in all animal sacrifices, the blood, as being the life of the creature [*x*], was forbidden to every one. But under the Gospel, in order to shew that the atonement made by the blood of Christ is complete, that the application of it to us is effectual, and that Jesus Christ being, as it were, incorporated with us, becomes our spiritual nourishment and life, he requires us not barely to commemorate his death as being our sin-

[*u*] Decr. Conc. Constant.

[*w*] Matt. xxvi. 28. Luke xxii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 25. [*x*] Gen. ix. 4.

offering,

offering, but to eat the consecrated bread, which is the symbol of his flesh, and to drink the wine which represents his blood. This circumstance of eating his flesh, Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, insists on very much, as being designed to give us more lively impressions of the benefits we enjoy by this sacrifice of Christ, than could have been done by a bare visible representation of his sufferings denoted by the breaking of the bread. Now if this was the design of requiring us to eat the bread, why should it not be as strong a reason for our drinking the wine? Since the wine poured out in this sacrament, as it represents our Saviour's blood in a state of separation, was, no doubt, intended to signify that our Saviour actually died for us: On which account, indeed, the Romanists allow that both the presence and the consecration of the wine are essential to this sacrament. But if the eating the bread be requisite, as more effectual than barely seeing it broken, why should not drinking the wine be, for the same reason, necessary, as more effectual than only seeing it poured out? Since, as cardinal du Perron himself allows [y], "They who receive the sacrament under both kinds, are more expressly, and particularly admonished, that his body has been divided from his blood in his suffering on the cross." This reasoning is plainly and strong in the case of one of the species, as in that of the other: And accordingly we find, that, in fact, our Lord made no difference between them; or, if any such was made, he seems to have laid rather more stress upon drinking the wine than upon eating the bread, by saying, *Drink ye all of it.* These considerations, drawn from the design of the sacrament, can have no peculiar regard to the apostles more than to other men; because it was appointed with a view to work effects, which ought to be produced in all Christians, as well as in the apostles; since all other Christians, as well as they, are intitled to the benefits of Christ's death. Now this sacrament being appointed as an assurance of these benefits, and a mean of obtaining

[y]. Chacun de ceux, qui prennent le corps et le sang de Christ Jesus sous les deux especes, est plus expressement et particulierement admonesté que le corps a esté divisé de son sang au supplice de la croix. Du Moul. p. 966.

them,

them, it must follow, that such a manner of receiving it as is, in the nature of things, the most effectual, must be supposed to be intended for all other men, as well as for the apostles. This ought to be supposed, unless there had been some express distinction made between them, of which there is not the least appearance. The Romanists, indeed, have a notion, that our Saviour, at the last supper, made his apostles priests; for they observe, that he used the sacrificial word *ποιεῖν*, as importing an action that required and supposed the character of priesthood [z]; from whence they argue, that his command that they should all drink of the cup, having been given to them in the quality of priests, is, therefore, not to be extended to the laity: But to this we answer, first, that the word *ποιεῖν* may very well be taken in a general sense, for any other action as well as a sacrificial one; and since no one knows what the Syriac word was, which our Saviour used on this occasion, nor whether it had a sacrificial sense or not, we cannot be assured that the evangelists, in translating it by the word *ποιεῖν*, intended to use this latter in a sacrificial sense or not. But even though the sacrificial sense of this word were admitted; it would not from thence follow that our Saviour must intend the apostles only should receive the cup; his design in using such a term, might be only to intimate that, as priests, they were to consecrate this sacrament, and then give it to others, as well as to receive it themselves; in which supposition there is nothing against other men's receiving the cup. All that can be said to that purpose is, that if these words are understood, and consequently were addressed to the apostles only, then they do not contain any express precept to lay-persons for receiving the cup; but if the Romanists will say this, they must also maintain, that there is no precept in them for lay-persons to receive the bread; for the words *Do this*, relate evidently to receiving the bread, as well as to drinking the

[z] The learned dean Hickes has observed, in the preface to the second part of his tracts against Popery, part lxxvii, that not only *ποιεῖν* has a sacrificial sense in some places of the Septuagint, but that the word *לַעֲשׂוֹת* has the like sacrificial sense in the Hebrew. But still it does not appear that our Saviour used that particular word on that occasion.

Tract IV. *On the Liberty recovered to the People of England, &c.* 193

wine. But as the Romanists allow, that all Christians are by these words commanded to take the bread, as well as the apostles are, they ought likewise to allow, that all Christians are commanded to drink the wine.

AND this, indeed, evidently appears from what is said by St. Paul [a]. The apostle there addresses himself to the whole body of the Christians in the church of Corinth, without any distinction. He gives them an account of the circumstances of the first institution, (without the least hint that only those among them, who were priests, were intitled to drink the cup) and says of them all in general, that, by eating that bread and drinking that cup, they shewed forth the death of our Lord till he should come, ver. 26; he bids every one of them, ver. 28, examine himself, and so eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, joining constantly the doing the former of these actions with the latter.

THERE is very little weight in the observation which some persons have made, that in the twenty-seventh verse of this chapter, some copies have *et*, or, instead of *et*, and. There is no reason to prefer the former of these readings to the latter, which our translators have chosen; for this latter is supported by some of the best manuscript copies, particularly the Alexandrine. But supposing we should read *et* in this verse, it would only shew that the apostle had a mind to represent more strongly the sin of communicating unworthily, by specifying each part of the communion by itself; not that one part only would be sufficient; the contrary to which appears by his having always joined them before.

THIS evidence for the necessity of communicating in both kinds, which has been deduced from the texts of Scripture, and the other considerations here abovementioned, is not a little confirmed by the general practice of the church, in this point, during all those ages in which her practice was of any great weight to prove the right method of acting in this point. She constantly admitted and required all Christians to receive the cup, as well as the bread, in the public celebration of the Lord's-supper. This

[a] 1 Cor. xi. 26.

might easily be shewn, by transcribing those numerous testimonies from the ancient writers of the church, which have been collected by the learned Albertinus, L'Arroque, and others: But there is no need of so doing, because the most learned and impartial among the Romanists themselves professedly agree, that, for many ages, from the time of the apostles, the communion, in public, was always given and received in both kinds: "Nor do I think, says Cassander [b], it can be shewn, that, for a whole thousand years and more, this most holy sacrament of the eucharist was never administered, from the Lord's-table, in the holy communion to the faithful people, in any part of the Catholic church, otherwise than under both the symbols of bread and wine." And after him, cardinal Bona has affirmed it as certain, that all Christians in general, laymen and women, did anciently receive the sacred mysteries, under both kinds, when they were present at the solemn administration of them. After these evidences of ancient and universal practice in the church, most plainly grounded on divine institution, is it not wonderful what could induce the church of Rome to make such a momentous alteration as wholly to suppress receiving the species of wine, by any of the communicants, excepting only the officiating priests! The principal reason that led her to make this change, was the prevalence of the notion, about the 9th century, that Christ's natural body was present in the eucharist; when this notion obtained, there soon followed upon it an excessive and superstitious reverence towards the consecrated substances. They were afraid, not only of spilling any of the wine, but of letting it hang upon their beards, as they dipped them into the cup when they drank it. In order to prevent this inconvenience, they, for some time, used to suck the wine out of the cup through long pipes; but afterwards they thought that all hazard of this kind would be best avoided, by taking the communion in the species of bread only, which could be much more easily and safely managed.

[b] De Sacr. Comm. sub utraque specie. Oper. p. 1027. "Nec puto demonstrari posse totis mille amplius annis in ulla Catholicæ ecclesiæ parte sacrosanctum hoc ecclesiæ sacramentum aliter, in sacra synaxi è mensâ Dominicâ, fideli populo, quàm sub utroque panis et vini symbolo administratum fuisse."

ed: They concluded withal, that they should not lose any spiritual benefit by taking only one species; since Christ's real and natural body being under the species of bread, his blood, and all the virtue of it, must needs be contained in one kind, as much as in both. This was plainly the ground upon which the council of Constance went: "Although, says the council, in the primitive
 " church the faithful received the sacrament under both species,
 " nevertheless, for avoiding certain perils and scandals, this cus-
 " tom hath, with reason, been introduced; that the officiating mi-
 " nister should receive under both species, and the lay-men under
 " the species of bread only: In regard that it ought to be firmly
 " believed, and not at all be doubted, that the whole body of
 " Jesus Christ is truly contained as well under the species of bread,
 " as under that of wine."

THE council of Trent proceeded upon the very same foundation. Its words are these. "Although our redeemer instituted
 " this sacrament in both kinds, and gave it so to his apostles, it
 " must nevertheless be confessed, that the whole Jesus Christ, and
 " the true sacrament is received in one kind; and accordingly as to
 " the benefit of it, those persons are not deprived of any grace ne-
 " cessary to salvation, who receive it under one kind only." But
 here I must observe, that even, if we should suppose the truth of the corporal presence of Jesus Christ in the eucharist, it would not follow that the body and blood of Christ would have an efficacy of course without any regard to the end and circumstances of the institution. For it cannot be supposed to have this efficacy in a merely natural way, but in virtue of the will and appointment of God. Bossuet Bp. of Meaux, indeed, took upon him to say [c], "That although
 " Jesus Christ hath separated his body and his blood, either really
 " on the cross, or mystically on the altars, yet he cannot separate
 " the virtue of them, nor cause any other grace to accompany
 " his blood when shed, than what also accompanies his sacrificed

[c] Encore que Jesus Christ ait separé son corps et son sang, ou reellement sur la croix, ou mystiquement sur les autels, il n'en peut separer la vertu, ni faire qu'une autre grace accompagne son sang repandu, que la même au fond que accompagne son corps immolé. *Traite de Commun.* p. 228.

“ body.” But, surely, God is under no necessity in this case: His divine substance, though it always is united, in the most intimate manner, to our souls, yet does not naturally, or of course, communicate any spiritual benefits to us: And why then should the sacred flesh of Jesus Christ naturally and necessarily impart any such virtue? No one can assert that it must, without derogating greatly from the absolute liberty and other attributes of God. All sensible Romanists must admit, that this must wholly depend upon our Saviour’s intention and will to communicate his grace: And this intention will, no doubt, be determined by our conforming or not, to the terms of his institution. No one can be intitled to expect his grace, who omits to perform the circumstances he required in order to it; unless there be reasons of great moment to disable or hinder him from so doing: Such reasons may, indeed, be conceived to excuse men before God. But unless there be such in the case, no benefit can be justly expected by those, who depart from the circumstances of a divine institution. And were the reasons given by the church of Rome of such importance, or necessity? It is plain they were not, even supposing their doctrine of the corporal presence to be true; for those reasons are drawn from things that Christ must have foreseen, when he instituted this sacrament. The consecrated wine was liable to be spilled, and men had beards that would be dipped into it, in his time, as well as in after-ages. And if he thought fit to ordain, that the sacrament should be received in both kinds, notwithstanding these pretended inconveniencies, the same could not be just reasons for making a change afterwards in his institution: But since the doctrine of the corporal presence hath been proved to be false, it is evident, that those reasons are still more frivolous, and the alteration much less to be excused; that church (upon a point of doctrine, grossly erroneous in itself, and which she might easily have known to be so) hath maimed and rendered ineffectual the most graciously beneficial institution of Christ, which, out of a due sense of his immense goodness towards us, was constantly adhered to in the purest ages of the church. This must be very justly accounted a grievous sacrilege in those, who take away the cup; and

and those who want it, and acquiesce under the want of it, must be reckoned very blameable as well as unhappy.

ANOTHER practice which we condemn in the church of Rome, is their invocation and worship of angels and of saints departed out of this life. Our charge against her in this point is founded on a decree of the council of Trent relating to it, considered together with the constant practice of that church; the latter of these shewing the true spirit and meaning of the former. The council of Trent decrees, "that the saints, reigning with Christ, are to be invoked for their prayers, and for their assistance, *opem et auxilium*;" which last expression plainly implies, that they assist us in some other respect, besides by their prayers on our behalf. And this notion is confirmed by the liturgies of that church, in which, all who assist at the public worship, are obliged to join, and by which the people are, naturally, led to regard and address to the saints and angels, but more especially to the blessed virgin, as patrons and protectors, who have power and particular office to assist their votaries on several occasions. I will not trouble you with instances of this nature; you may easily find them in books made public by authority in all the Romish countries: I shall only observe a known matter of fact; which is, that by using those liturgies, and other books of devotion agreeable to them, the lower people in that communion have, generally, been, and are now, persuaded, that not only the common protections and advantages of life, but the highest spiritual blessings may lawfully and properly be asked of the saints, some of whom they worship with a zeal, which makes them often neglectful of God the Father, and of Christ our Redeemer. This has been often confessed and complained of, by several of the more moderate among their own writers. Ludovicus Vives, an author of eminence in that communion, speaking of the devotions paid by the Romanists to their saints [d], saies, "They worship them as having, in many respects, the same opinion of them, which the gentiles had of their Gods."

[d] Eos non aliter venerantur, quam Deum ipsum. Non video in multis, quod discrimen sit, inter eorum opinionem de sanctis, et id quod gentiles habebant de Diis. In notis in S. August. De civ Dei, lib. viii. cap. 27.

Cassander, a person of distinguished learning and probity in that church, speaking of the worship of saints, says [e], "Another error is, that men of no bad dispositions, have chosen for themselves certain saints, as peculiar guardians and patrons, and have placed more trust in their merits and intercession, than in the merits of Christ; and so throwing a neglect upon Christ's office of intercession, they have put the saints, and especially the Virgin-mother, into his room." And more lately Flechier, bishop of Nismes, expressed himself to the same effect [f]. "Who can hear, without indignation, those parallels which are sometimes made of the saints, with God and with Jesus Christ; by ascribing to them a kind of holiness, which is peculiar to the sovereign sanctifier of souls, and an efficacy of conversion, which belongs only to him who is, by his mediation, the author and finisher of our salvation."

THESE unhappy consequences may, without injustice, be charged upon the church of Rome; because she has not prevented such occasions of scandal, by forbearing the use of these liturgies and offices, which, as Bellarmine [g] himself allows, seem to imply, "more than the form *Ora pro nobis*." But even if all their prayers had been reduced to this form, yet still such addresses to angels and saints departed, would have been not only unwarranted by reason, and the Scripture, but repugnant to both of them.

THERE could be no ground from reason for this practice of invoking and worshiping saints departed, because reason could not give us any assurance that they know all that passes upon earth,

[e] *Alter error est, quod homines, etiam non mali, certos sibi sanctos tanquam tutores & patronos sibi delegarunt, atque in eorum meritis et intercessione, plus quam in Christi meritis, fiduciam posuerunt. Atque adeo unico illo advocacy Christi officio obscurato, sanctos, et imprimis virginem matrem, in illius locum substituerunt.*

[f] *Qui pourroit écouter sans indignation ces parallèles qu'on fait quelque fois des saints avec Dieu, et avec Jesus Christ, en leur attribuant une espece de sainteté qui ne convient qu'au souverain sanctificateur des ames, ou une efficace de conversion qui n'est propre qu'à celui qui est par sa mediation l'auteur et le consommateur de nostre salut. Preface au Panegyriques.*

[g] See this passage of Bellarm. apud Hughes of the *Invocat. of Saints*.

or even any of the particular wants and distresses that we may be under on some occasions: On the contrary, it represents it as more probable, that the souls of men departed, and even other spirits of higher orders, as they cannot be, at one time, in more than one part of the universe, must be ignorant of some things that happen in other very distant parts of it: But especially, reason gives us almost an assurance that our thoughts and mental prayers cannot, ordinarily, be known either to faints or angels. For these being the internal operations of our souls, are only discoverable by God the Father of spirits, who, by his immensity, is united intimately to us: They must remain secrets to all other beings, who are exterior to us, unless made to them by some outward signs. God may communicate this knowledge to them upon particular occasions; but of themselves they cannot have it, nor can we collect by the light of reason, that he will make such communications to them. Now to offer up prayers to those, whom we do not certainly know to hear them, is absurd, especially when we know that God himself hears, and is willing to receive them; and 'tis not only an absurd, but a presumptuous thing, because it implies an ascribing to creatures, such powers and dignities as we have no warrant to ascribe to them, nor any just ground to believe they do enjoy; from reason, therefore, there is no foundation to think the practice of invoking faints departed to be lawful, but rather the contrary.

AND the same may be truly said of the Scriptures of the Old Testament; in which all the precepts and directions given for making of prayers, import, that they ought to be addressed to God, and that upon this general ground, that he doth hear them, and, therefore, to him *all flesh ought to come* [b]. The holy Scriptures further affirm, that to him alone belongs the knowledge of the heart, *Thou alone knowest the hearts of all the children of men* [i]; whereby is strongly implied that he doth not, ordinarily, communicate this knowledge to any creature.

If there be nothing in the Scriptures of the Old Testament of any express particular prohibition against worshipping, or praying

[b] Psal. lxxv. 2.

[i] 2 Chron. vi. 30.

to saints or angels, yet the general prohibition against having, or worshiping any other God, besides the Lord Jehovah, was intended not only against the heathen false deities, but also against that of any other intermediate beings whatever, between God and man. The practice of worshiping certain spiritual beings, originally, of a nature between God and man, or the spirits of men departed this life had been very ancient. And, at first, it was no more than desiring their protection, favour, and intercession; they were considered as subordinate officers appointed by the one supreme God, to interpose in the concerns of mankind, and be the instruments of his providence towards them. This is the account which Hesiod and Plato give of them, and seems to have by them been received from the Egyptians; and this continued to be all along the notion of men of sense, as we find by Celsus, Hierocles, and others.

BUT this practice of requesting their intercession and aid, as it was without any ground in reason, so it had a strong natural tendency to corrupt and debase the minds of the common people, to make them lose their notion of God, as an infinitely powerful, eternal and omnipresent spirit, and at length to conceive these mediators as deities nearly, if not quite, co-ordinate with him, who was, at first, regarded as supreme. It had actually this consequence, and in process of time introduced that gross idolatry which overspread the heathen world. There is great reason, therefore, to think that when God gave a law to the Israelites, who were encompassed with these idolaters, and, in it, forbade any other God to be worshiped besides himself, he must have intended to forbid the worship or religious invocation of the departed spirits, even of good men, or that of angels; in regard to the ill tendency which it might have in corrupting their notions and practice. This is made the more probable, by considering that the Jews never did practice any such invocation: No nation was ever more likely to fall into it than they were; for no one had ever a greater veneration for their ancestors, and their prophets: Indeed, the character and conduct of some of them, particularly of Abraham, Moses, and Elijah, were such, as naturally, to make it be thought they

they might be proper intercessors with God, to whom, while they were living, they had actually applied in that way with success and encouragement, on some great occasions; and yet, in the course of many hundred years, there is not one instance that such invocation of departed saints was ever practised among the Jews.

SOME Romanists have imagined, that the reason why the Jews forbore to do this, was, because they had not then any assurance that the souls of good men departed, were in a state of sense and happiness, or that they enjoyed the vision of God. But that this was not the true reason, we may justly conclude from their having likewise forbore to worship angels, who were known to be ministers of God, and in his presence in heaven. They had often appeared on occasions that might naturally have led men to invoke them, and desire their intercession with God: Such were the appearances of angels to *Manaob's wife* [k], and others. They had opportunities of speaking to these blessed spirits, who went from them directly up into heaven, and left them in circumstances that might seem particularly to have required their intercession and assistance. The prophet Zechariah saw an angel actually engaged in prayers for the people [l]: And yet upon none of these occasions is there the least mention that any religious worship was paid to them, or that their intercessions with God were desired. Now had there been any request or practice of this sort, the sacred writers, certainly, would not have omitted to mention them, either in the way of censure, or of approbation, because they must have been facts of great moment in order to regulate the future practice of that people; from all which considerations it is sufficiently evident, that there is no ground in the Old Testament for the invocation of saints departed, or of angels; but rather that from thence there is reason to believe it unlawful.

AND the same thing may be shewn from the New Testament, with yet more evidence. Our blessed Lord enforces the precept, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God*, (upon which it is probable

[k] Judges xiii. 3.

[l] Chap. i. 12.

the Jews thought themselves obliged, not to worship any saints or angels) by adding, *him only shalt thou serve* [m]. And having done this, without any exprefs permission to worship, or invoke saints or angels, he may justly be thought willing to confirm the notion the Jews had of the unlawfulness of such practices. Secondly, the New Testament declares, exprefsly, that *there is but one mediator between God and man*, namely, *Christ Jesus* [n]; and that though there be that are called gods, many, and lords, many, yet that, to Christians, *there is but one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him* [o]. In the former of those passages, St. Paul had been exhorting, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, should be made for all men. This might, naturally, have led him to mention the intercession of saints, as proper also to be desired on their behalf: But to this effect there is not the least word or intimation. In the latter text, he is plainly speaking of the notion which the heathens had of many mediators, by which term they meant agents, and intercessors between God and man; for they had no notion of mediators of redemption. In opposition, therefore, to their sense of the word, he must be understood to declare that there is, and ought to be, but *one mediator between God and man, even Christ Jesus*. Agreeably to this, the same apostle cautions the Colossians, chap. ii. 18, 19, that they should not *suffer any man to beguile them of their reward, in a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment, ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God* [p].

It

[m] Matt. iv. 10.

[n] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

[o] 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.

[p] St. Chrysostom, on the Epist. to the Colossians, S. i. p. 90, saith, it was the chief design of that epistle, to beat down the error of them who made addresses to God by angels. And S. vi. p. 123, he saith, there were some who said we must come to God by angels, not immediately by Christ, for that is too high for us.

This error, saith Theodoret, upon the text, remained long among the people of Colossæ, and the adjacent countries; and for that cause a council met at Laodicea, a city

It is visible, in this passage, that the persons who did endeavour to seduce the Colossians to the worship of angels, were, themselves, professed Christians. For St. Paul would not have said, either of the Jews, or of the Heathens, that they were in a voluntary humility, or that they intruded into the things they had not seen, and did not hold the head, even Jesus Christ. Such expressions would have been improper and absurd, if applied to the professed enemies of the Gospel. The seducers must, therefore, have been Christians, and, by consequence, such as did not worship angels with the highest kind of worship; for as that idolatrous practice would have been quite inconsistent with their profession, St. Paul, therefore, would have spoke of it with much sharper resentment than he does. Now if these seducers were Christians, and did not worship angels with the highest kind of worship, it then follows, that they were in the case of the members of the church of Rome, at present; that is to say, they did nothing more than invoke angels for their intercession with God, and for their assistance and protection by virtue of his appointment; and in doing this, they were either negligent as to addressing themselves to Jesus Christ; or thinking it a thing more than they were intitled to, to address themselves directly, to the Father or to him; they, therefore, applied to the angels, that they might present their prayers to God.

BUT whatever their notion was, the apostle takes occasion from it, to make a general declaration against any religious worship that should be paid to angels; in which declaration since he makes

a city about 20 miles from Colossæ, and made a canon against praying to angels. It is the 35th canon of that council. This, saith the canon, the council ordain to be done, namely, that men should not pray to angels pretending humility, and saying; that the God of all things is invisible, inaccessible and incomprehensible, and that it was fit we should procure God's favour by means of angels. See Theod. on the Epist. to the Colossians. See the Leodicean can. in Johnson's Vade mecum, vol. ii. p. 114, and Bever Pandect.

Bp. Stillingf. Posth. works, p. 299, says, that this canon of the Leodicean council having been admitted into the Codex canonum of the universal church, hath the same force as if it had been made in a general council.

no exception in favour of the practice of invoking them as patrons, or intercessors with God, (which he must very well know if it was then usual) we may conclude, that he intended to condemn any such practice: In order to impress this more forcibly upon the minds of Christians, St. John was not suffered to pay even such worship or respect to an angel as the high dignity and excellency of such a spirit might, otherwise, have naturally required; he was twice commanded to *worship God*, i. e. *him only* [q].

BUT if it was not allowable to worship angels, it may, with more reason, be concluded that departed saints are not to be worshiped; because, whatever reason holds against worshiping angels, holds at least as strongly against worshiping saints departed. And there is one other circumstance peculiarly strong against the latter; namely, there is no sufficient ground either from reason or the Scripture to believe that they are acquainted with our affairs, that they can always hear our vocal, or, at least, ever be acquainted with our mental petitions. The Romish school-men, indeed, have imagined a way, by which they hold the saints to see all things, viz. in the essence of God, as in a mirror: But as this is a fiction intirely without any foundation in reason or the holy Scripture, no stress at all can be laid upon it.

THE proofs which some Romish writers draw from the Apocalypse of St. John, are of as little weight; because the representations in that book are mostly emblematical, and not intended to express the reality of things, as they are in heaven, but to denote the condition and future distresses of the church on earth. This is particularly true with regard to the souls represented as being *under the altar* [r], as to the *angels offering incense upon it* [s], and to several other circumstances from which the Romanists argue; which arguments, therefore, are of no avail. Now this is one proof that God does not design that we should pray to saints, since he has not given us reason to believe that they have such a knowledge of our affairs as is a necessary foundation for our addresses to them: And when this is added to what is declared ex-

[q] Rev. xxii. 9.

[r] Rev. vi. 9.

[s] Rev. viii. 3.

pressly in the Scripture against worshiping even angels, the proofs of the unlawfulness of both of them are so strong, that no Christian ought to think himself warranted to practice them, but rather to be under a strong prohibition of so doing.

IN regard to the worship of images, the Romans excuse themselves from the charge of idolatry, by affirming that they do not believe there is any virtue in them, on account of which they ought to be adored, but that using them chiefly as memorials, they only give them a proper veneration or respect for the sake of the persons they represent, and to whom this veneration is referred. It would require too much room in these papers to produce all the reasons and facts that appear to prove the contrary to what is here alleged, with regard, at least, to the common people in the church of Rome. And there is the less need of doing this, because you will best judge of these matters, by what you see in the country where you are, and what you observe more, when you get into Italy. In the mean time, it is probable, some of the more learned and moderate of the Roman Catholics, may not have the same notion of images, nor practice towards them as the common people do; by consequence the former may not be chargeable with idolatry with regard to them: And as my design at present is, chiefly, to remark those doctrines and practices which are enjoined by the church of Rome to all in her communion, which must be believed and practised by all, and which, therefore, are the necessary reasons for our keeping separate from her communion; I have, therefore, selected only those which have been mentioned; namely, transubstantiation, the adoration, and the sacrifice in the mass, the communion in one kind only, and the invocation and worship of saints and angels. No one can deny these to be the avowed and general practices of that church, and what she imposes upon all her members. At the same time, I hope, I have plainly shewn, that all these practices are utterly unlawful; and, therefore, are just and necessary reasons for which our ancestors departed, and we remain separate from her communion.

BUT in order to invalidate this conclusion, the writers of the church of Rome object, that most of these practices which we condemn, were, for several ages, universal through all Christendom. There was no visible church on earth but what complied with them: From whence, they say, it follows, that those practices cannot be, as we pretend, idolatrous and unlawful. For if they were so, then there could not have been any salvation attainable in those churches, since idolatry is a crime inconsistent with salvation; and if no salvation could have been attainable in the church, then the church must have failed in those times; for a society, in which none could be saved, could not, properly, be a church of Christ; and if the church failed at any time, then Christ did not make good his promise to it, that it should always exist, or, that *the gates of Hades should not prevail against it* [t]. But this consequence, say they, is not to be admitted: No Christian can allow that the promise of Christ hath failed; therefore, the abovementioned practices must certainly be innocent. It is a calumny in us to charge them as unlawful; therefore, it must also be further admitted, that we Protestants cannot be justified for separating ourselves from the church of Rome, on account of practices not unlawful. We must be schismatics in that respect.

IN answer to this argument, several learned writers, among the Protestants, have applied themselves to shew the falshood of the first position, upon which it is grounded; to wit, the universal prevalence of the practices in question, at any one time, throughout the whole Christian church. And they have sufficiently proved, that the practice of adoring the host, which is the grossest part of the Romish idolatry, did not obtain in several churches; particularly not in that of Æthiopia. These authors have, likewise, made it in some degree probable, that there were all along some churches in the Vallies situate among the mountains that divide Italy from France, which were not only clear from the practice of adoring the host, but even from that of invoking and worshipping saints and angels.

[t] Matt. xvi. 18.

IT is true that the persecutions which those churches have suffered at different times, have so far destroyed their authentic writings, that we have hardly remains enough of them to clear the history of their constant succession beyond dispute. We are forced to derive our accounts of them chiefly from their inveterate enemies, who endeavoured, as much as they could, not only to destroy, but to calumniate and blacken them. Yet, even from the accounts of these enemies compared together, there is some probability that God preserved a number of persons in those countries who were not guilty of any idolatrous practices, who did not either adore the host, or worship angels or saints departed, as the church of Rome does. The noted testimony of Renier, who was himself an inquisitor and persecutor of them, is much to their advantage [u]. “ Among all the sects (says he) that either now
“ are, or have been, there is no one more pernicious to the
“ church than that of the Lionois. First, because it has
“ been more lasting than any other; for some say it hath con-
“ tinued from the time of pope Sylvester, and some from the
“ time of the apostles. Secondly, because it is more general; for
“ there is hardly any country in which there are not some persons
“ of this sect. Thirdly, because, as all other sects give horror to
“ those that hear them by the shockingness of their blasphemies
“ against God, this of the Lionois hath a great shew of piety.” Thus Renier. And there are many other passages in the historians of those times, by which these Vaudois may, with great probability, be vindicated from the aspersions and calumnies thrown upon them. Though, perhaps, in an unlearned age, they might not be right in all their opinions, yet they were in great measure clear from those gross corruptions in worship that I have mentioned, and were pure to an eminent degree in their morals. How-

[u] Inter omnes sectas, quæ adhuc sunt vel fuerunt, non est perniciosior ecclesiæ quam Leonistarum. Primo, quia est diuturnior; aliqui enim dicunt quod duraverit a tempore Silvestri, aliqui a tempore apostolorum. Secundo, quia est generalior; fere enim nulla est terra in qua hæc secta non sit. Tertio, quia cum aliæ sectæ immanitate blasphemiarum in Deum audientibus horrorem incutiant, hæc Leonistarum magnam habet speciem pietatis. Bibl. Patr. tom. iv. part ii. p. 746.

ever, I shall not give you the trouble of long historical disquisitions about clearing the character or succession of these churches; because it plainly is not incumbent upon us Protestants to prove, that there were, at all times, some churches in being that were clear of the corruptions that have been here mentioned. On the contrary, the Romanists are visibly obliged, for the support of their argument against us, to give clear proof that all Christians, in every age, were actually involved in them. Now this the Romanists can never do, unless they were acquainted with the religious state of all Christians upon earth, in every age, since our Saviour; which they cannot, with any shew of reason, pretend to have been: There might be numbers of Christians in divers places of Asia, of Africa, and even of Europe, unknown both to them and us, who were not involved in these corruptions of worship. If they were not any where spread through large tracts of country, so as to draw the observation of persons at a distance upon them, their fewness and obscurity did not make them incapable of being parts of the true church of Christ. The Romanists must, and many of them do, allow that numerousness is not a necessary circumstance to that purpose. Now since it is certain that the Romanists cannot prove, that there never were any societies of Christians but what were involved in the corruptions that have been here specified, it follows, that their argument, raised upon that supposition, is utterly invalid; and our proofs against those corruptions, drawn from reason and the holy Scripture, remain in their full force. Those practices are certainly very sinful, and even damnable in their own nature.

HOWEVER, we do not represent this consequence as taking place in it's strictness, with regard to all persons in the Romish communion. We do not account all persons who have been, or are, involved in those corruptions, to be, on that account, incapable of salvation. We have, on the contrary, reasonable hopes that many such persons who are sincere in their errors, as not having had either abilities, or opportunities, humanly speaking, of knowing better, may and will, by the mercy of God, be saved eternally. Accordingly, we make no scruple of acknowledging, that,
even

even during the time that those corruptions were most prevalent, and generally spread over Europe, the churches which practised them, having, at the same time, many Christians in their communion who were thus sincerely ignorant of the truth, and thereby capable of eternal salvation, were on that account real, though corrupted, churches of Christ; and that they retained, though a corrupted, yet still a duly commissioned, ministry, which, therefore, we made no difficulty of deriving from them.

BUT yet, since those corrupt practices abovementioned were certainly unlawful in their own nature, and, consequently, not consistent with salvation, in any persons, who either did, or might, if they had properly endeavoured it, have known them to be so, and yet persisted in them; it follows that they always were, and, at present, are, a necessary cause of separating from that church, to all persons who could have discovered them to be unlawful, or can do so at present. Nothing, therefore, can be more groundless than the argument sometimes used by Romanists to Protestants [*w*], viz. That we allow, men may be saved in their communion; but they do not allow that any can be saved in ours, and therefore their communion is to be chosen as the safety. In this argument, they either mistake or misrepresent the concession we make. We only allow, that those persons, who, morally speaking, are not in circumstances to know better, may be saved, (through their involuntary, and well-meaning ignorance) in their communion. But to those of that church, who have, at any time, sufficient capacity and opportunity to know better, and do not make use of them to acquire such knowledge, or act according to it, but either remain in the communion of the church of Rome or go over to it; to such persons, I say, we dare not give any hopes of salvation. We advise them to come out of Babylon, lest they be partakers of her plagues; and

[*w*] See Polnitz's Memoirs, who observes that this argument had the greatest weight in converting Henry IV. of France; and that it was also employed with success in converting the late duke of Brunswick, and his daughter, afterwards married to the late emperor.

what hath been said in these preceeding papers is sufficient to prove that this advice is good.

FROM what has been here proved concerning the present terms of communion in the church of Rome, it is plain, that, while they continue as they are, the bishop of that See cannot have just claim to any spiritual authority or jurisdiction over this realm. For by his having excommunicated all Christians, who will not comply with them, he really makes himself and his adherents guilty of schism; and as long as he is so, he certainly cannot have any spiritual authority over those Christians who, during that time, are not of his church.

SOME Protestants, indeed, of learning and rank [x], have seemed to think that if the church of Rome should ever hereafter make the terms of her communion such as might be complied with, the bishop of that See would then have a just claim to be restored to his ancient authority, as patriarch of the west, over all the churches that formerly were subject to his direction, and over Great Britain among the rest.

BUT it is necessary to be observed, that this is not the sense of our national laws; which do, on the contrary, expressly affirm, and require all persons in any office ecclesiastical, civil or military, to declare, "That no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate whatsoever hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction,

[x] King James I. acknowledgeth the pope to be patriarch of the west, *i. e.* head of the general council of the western church. And Thomas, lord bishop of Winchester, under Queen Elizabeth, being demanded why we own him not so in effect, answered bluntly, but truly, Because he is not content with the right of a patriarch: For should he disclaim the pretence of dissolving the bond of allegiance, should he retire to the privileges of a patriarch, in seeing the canons executed; the schism would lie at our door, if we should refuse it. Thorndike's due way of Composing Differences, p. 7. in his fifth part of Church Government, p. 233.

Dr. Cosins, bishop of Durham, said, that we are to accord with the Roman Catholics in acknowledgment of the bishop of Rome, if he would rule and be ruled by the canons of the church, to be patriarch of the west by right of ecclesiastical and imperial constitution, in such places where the kings and governors of those places had received him, and found it behoofull for them to make use of his jurisdiction, without any necessary dependance upon him by divine right. Cosins bishop of Durham, at the end of bishop Bull's answer to the bishop of Meaux.

“ power, ſuperiority, preeminence or authority, eccleſiaſtical or “ ſpiritual, within this realm.” Which words, ſo very ſtrong and univerſal as they are, exclude the pretenſions in the church of Rome to any ſpiritual authority over us [y], both now, and in all times and caſes whatſoever; ſo that in order to a full vindication of our preſent eſtabliſhment, and of the liberty we now enjoy under it, we are obliged to examine the grounds from the holy Scripture, and the conſtitutions of the primitive or ancient Chriſtian church, confirmed by long uſage, in virtue of which, the church of Rome pretends to have any ſpiritual authority over us. By doing this, you will be led to ſee what the ſtate of this nation was, as to its eccleſiaſtical ſubjection, in the days of our anceſtors; and to be more fully convinced, as well of the right as the great happineſs of our preſent liberty in that reſpect.

THE biſhops of Rome in claiming a right derived from the holy Scripture of ſpiritual authority over the whole church of Chriſt, and conſequently over the Britiſh churches among others, make two ſuppoſitions as the grounds of this right; namely,

FIRST, that by the institution of our bleſſed Saviour, the apoſtle St. Peter was veſted with a ſupremacy over the whole church of Chriſt.

SECONDLY, that our Lord intended that after St. Peter's death, all the biſhops of Rome, in ſucceſſion, ſhould be veſted with the like authority.

BEFORE I examine particularly what arguments they bring in proof of theſe ſuppoſitions, I muſt obſerve in general, that this authority, aſcribed to the pope, is a matter of ſuch importance, that, if it were true, we might juſtly expect to find, in the holy Scriptures, very full and plain declarations about it: Becauſe it greatly concerns the religious practice of all Chriſtians, who muſt be very blameable, if they reſuſe or neglect to pay the ſubmiſ-

[y] The great body of our clergy in their convocations, and the divines of both our univerſities, in the reign of Henry VIIIth, declared ſolemnly to the public, “ that the pope of Rome had no greater juriſdiction committed to him by God in “ the Scripture, over this realm of England than any other biſhop.” See Oxford Theſes.

tion that is due to the spiritual pastors designed to guide and govern them in the way to salvation: When yet they have no other way of knowing what authority belongs to those pastors, except by divine revelation only. But that no such positive or clear instructions were ever given by our Saviour about the governing superiority of St. Peter, over the other apostles, we may, in the first place, collect from the silence of the Scripture, on several remarkable occasions, when such declarations from our Saviour might justly have been expected. One such occasion was the dispute that arose among the apostles who of them should be the greatest [z]. It is not conceivable that such a dispute could have been, had they known that our Lord had appointed Peter to be their spiritual governor. But if it should be thought possible, that in the warmth of their ambition, they should have forgotten our Lord's directions upon that subject, yet it is not to be conceived that our Lord himself should not have taken this occasion to repeat and reinforce them on their minds, when their acquiescence about them would be of very great importance to the peace of his church, and to the regular propagation and subsistence of his religion in the world. It would have been very natural that our Lord, after having reprov'd their ambition, and declared what superiority they ought not to affect, should have mentioned somewhat about that authority which he did intend to vest in St. Peter. But of this not a word is said, nor the least intimation given by any of the evangelists; not even by St. Luke, who places one of these disputes on the same day when our Saviour was seized by the Jews. Instead of then mentioning any thing of St. Peter's peculiar superiority, our Lord promises all the apostles that they should *sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel* [a], without intimating that there should be any difference in the dignity or authority of any of those thrones. This might be naturally taken to imply, that there should not be any difference between them while on earth as to their spiritual authority.

It is true, that Peter had always some distinction shewn to him by our Saviour and some precedence among the apostles, for

[z] Mark ix. 34.

[a] Matt. xix. 28.

reasons, with which we are not well acquainted. But our Lord's treating him with this personal regard, was a thing far different from appointing him to be a governor or superintendent over the apostles themselves in spiritual matters. Had he intended to have done this, he would certainly have declared and specified the nature of that office, as far as would have been necessary; as it must have been in some degree, because it was a matter intirely new, and the extent of it not to be discovered by natural reason. But our Lord's silence is not the only argument for his not intending to grant such a supremacy to St. Peter. The same thing may be inferred, from his having actually given the highest spiritual powers requisite to the founding and governing a church, to all the apostles alike. This he evidently did, when he first sent them out to preach the Gospel [b], when he gave them the power of binding and loosing [c], and, afterwards, when he gave them the power of *forgiving sins* [d]. He told them all alike that *he would be with them to the end of the world* [e], and that they should all be baptised, that is, should receive the *power of the holy Ghost* [f], which was to guide them into *all truth* [g], and to be endued *with power*, i. e. miraculous power, *from on high* [h]. Accordingly on the day of pentecost [i] the appearance of a tongue of fire sate, without distinction, upon each of them; and ver. 4. they were all filled with the holy Spirit, and spake with tongues, and ver. 42, 43, they all taught and did miracles.

ACCORDING to the powers thus equally conferred, the apostles, after our Lord's decease, plainly acted upon a foot of equality among themselves, as we see by what passed in the assembly of apostles and elders at Jerusalem upon the question about circumcising the Gentile converts [k]. St. James then spoke with as much appearance of authority, as St. Peter, and the decree was made in the name of all the apostles, elders and brethren; ver. 23, without any particular mention or distinction of St. Peter, which

[b] Matt. x. 1. Mark vi. 7. Luke ix. 1. [c] Matt. xviii. 18. [d] John xx. 23.

[e] Matt. xxviii. 19. [f] Acts i. 5. Luke iii. 16. [g] John xvi. 13.

[h] Luke xxiv. 49. [i] Acts ii. 3. [k] Acts xv.

would never have been omitted, had he been known to be a spiritual governor among them.

NOR did St. Peter, or they, on other occasions, either say, or do, any thing, from which such his authority could justly be inferred. The office of a church governor would probably have consisted in determining where churches should be formed, and to whom they should be committed, what method and order should be used in divine service, what forms and times of prayer, what compliances should be used in regard to the prejudices of the Jews and Gentiles; it would have been exerted by his inflicting censures himself, and receiving appeals from others, with various such points; and if St. Peter had been known to be a church-governor, applications of this sort must have been made to him. He must have taken occasion to shew and exert his governing character and authority; but he neither did any thing of this nature himself, nor did the other apostles, in any part of their conduct, at all acknowledge or intimate that they were subordinate to, or dependent upon, him. St. Paul, when, Eph. iv. 7. he is enumerating the persons to whom God had committed the government of the church, says nothing of any governor in chief; on the contrary, he declares that he himself was no way inferior [l] to St. Peter, St. James or the chief of the apostles. And, indeed, he was so far from shewing any submission to St. Peter, that in regard to the conduct to be observed towards the Gentile converts [m], he withstood him to his face, and openly reprov'd him before all. This behaviour of St. Paul, without any mention of, or salvo to, St. Peter's supremacy would have been not compatible with it; and, therefore, since nothing was said of it, on this trying occasion, either by St. Peter, or by any other person, we may justly conclude that Peter had not really any such supremacy.

THESE are considerations of such moment against the Romish claim of it, that the arguments ought to be very strong in order to outweigh them. Let us then examine what arguments the Romaniſts alledge for this purpose.

[l] 2 Cor. xi. 5.

[m] Gal. ii. 11, 14.

ONE of them is drawn from Matt. xvi. 18, where our Lord calls Peter a rock, and *upon this rock*, he says, *I will build my church*. This, according to the Romanists, imports, that he would make him a spiritual governor as well over the apostles themselves, as over all other Christians. But this cannot be inferred, either from the circumstances in which this promise was made, or the terms in which it was expressed: It was made on occasion of St. Peter's having professed his belief, that, *Jesus was the Son of God*, ver. 16. This confession, probably, all the other apostles were ready to have made, as well as he; for they all had actually made the same before, on another occasion [n]. And, therefore, his making it now could hardly be a reason for our Lord to confer so peculiar an authority upon him. Indeed, as he spoke in the name of the rest, he was, in some measure, distinguished from them; and, therefore, our Lord alluding to his name, signifying a rock, mentions only him as being designed for a foundation to his church. But, that the other apostles also were meant to be joined with him in this foundation, appears from St. Paul's having said [o], that the church was built upon the apostles, in the plural number; and withal, upon the prophets, which latter expression shews, that it was to be built upon the doctrine or preaching of the apostles; and the spiritual Jerusalem [p], or church of Christ, is represented as a wall having twelve foundations, upon which were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. This implies, that the church was built equally on them all.

AGAIN, the Romanists alledge, that our Saviour promised to give to Peter the *keys of the kingdom of heaven* [q], which same promise he did not make to any of the other apostles. Now it is true, that this promise was not made in the very same terms to any of them; but all the same powers that were contained in it, were granted as fully to them, as to him. The metaphor of the keys signified a commission to preach the Gospel, to declare the terms of salvation, to admit believers into the church by baptism, with authority also to exclude them, when they believe, or act,

[n] Matt. xiv. 33.

[q] Matt. xvi. 19.

[o] Eph. ii. 20.

[p] Apoc. xxi. 10, 14.

amiss, from the visible communion of it, by spiritual censures rightly inflicted, and to restore them again upon their repentance. Now, probably, all these powers were contained in that of binding and loosing, which signified what Peter was to do with the keys. See Whitby, Com. vol. i. p. 149. And this power of binding and loosing was conferred upon all the apostles, as well as on Peter [r]. The only circumstance that seems intended to be peculiar to Peter, was, that he was to have the honour of first preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, as he did to Cornelius and his friends [s].

ANOTHER passage alledged for St. Peter's supremacy is where our Lord said to Peter only, *Feed my lambs, and my sheep* [t]. From whence the Romanists infer, that he had a superior and peculiar commission given him to that purpose. But this is, in no degree, probable; since the other apostles had all the spiritual powers requisite for that purpose as well as Peter. The words were, in all appearance, meant only as an exhortation to him as representative of the rest, that they should all discharge the great duty of feeding the church. Though, probably, Peter's having thrice denied our Lord just before, might occasion this charge to be more particularly addressed to him.

THE Romanists insist further upon the 32d verse of the 22d chap. of St. Luke's Gospel, wherein our Saviour tells Peter, that he had prayed for him, that his faith might not fail. This does not imply, that his faith should not actually fail, but rather the possibility and danger that it might; and how does this imply the grant of authority?

THESE preceding texts, which are all the Romanists offer, are far from proving any governing superiority of St. Peter over the other apostles. But if there had been any such in St. Peter himself, how would it follow, that it was to be continued in any other person, not an apostle, after Peter's death, especially in the bishops of Rome in succession? There is not the least intimation of this in the holy Scripture, which, in a matter of such importance would certainly have been given in order to prevent disputes, &c.

[r] Matt. xviii. 18.

[s] Acts x. 24.

[t] John xxi. 15.

BUT the silence of the Scripture is not the only argument against the divine institution of a primacy, which the Romanists contend for in the bishop of Rome as successor of St. Peter. They affirm, that, in virtue of succeeding to this primacy of St. Peter, the bishop of Rome hath a divine right of singular and peculiar inspection over the whole church, of taking care that the other bishops, in all parts of it, should keep to the true faith, and observe the canons—of censuring the transgressors, of summoning the other bishops to councils when he sees necessary, and of excommunicating them if they refuse to come. But would Christ, or his apostles have instituted such a primacy in the See of Rome with design that it should be of perpetual continuance, without giving any notice or intimation of it in the Scripture, especially, when there does not, in the reason of things, appear any necessity, or even expediency, for such an institution? The reason given by some, viz. “that the primacy of the bishop of Rome was intended to express the unity of the priesthood, or episcopacy, and that he was designed to be as a center of union among them,” seems to be, if at all intelligible, yet, at least, not of sufficient weight in such a case.

BUT without enlarging much in confuting these reasons, there is a decisive argument against the divine institution of such a primacy in the bishop of Rome, or any other. It is, that, if there had been such a divine institution of the primacy, it must have been designed to remain perpetually, whatever circumstances that church might come to be in. But this could not be our Lord's intention, for he declared that *his kingdom was not of this world* [u], i. e. he did not intend to break in upon the right or authority of the civil sovereigns. But this he must have done, had he instituted such a primacy to remain in the See of Rome; for it might easily happen, that some of the bishops, whom the bishop of Rome, in virtue of his primacy, might call to his council, might be subjects of different sovereigns, who might forbid their bishops to go to the bishop of Rome's council. In this case, the bishops,

[u] John xviii. 36.

if they obeyed their primate of Rome, must be under a necessity of disobeying their civil sovereign. But such a breach on the authority of civil sovereigns, there is no reason to think our Saviour intended to make, as it was not necessary to the subsistence of his religion in the world, and was contrary to his own declaration about the nature of his kingdom. He could not, therefore, institute a primacy of such a nature as the Romanists pretend, either in the church of Rome, or in any other.

WHATEVER precedence or superiority the bishop of Rome obtained over other bishops, must have been derived wholly from human appointment, either ecclesiastical or civil, or both together. And there was, indeed, an expediency that some order, or precedence, should be settled among the Christian bishops. When converts were made, to any considerable number, in any city, a bishop with Presbyters were set over them in things spiritual, for the care, instruction, and government of them. And it was expedient that, when these particular churches grew to be numerous in a province, they should not be quite independent of each other, which would have been greatly to their disadvantage, encompassed, as they were, with persecuting enemies. It might be even needful, that the governors of them should sometimes meet together, in order to mutual advice, support, and consolation, and for the preservation of due order and discipline among them. In these meetings it was necessary that some precedence should be settled among the bishops; and this precedence was naturally given to those bishops, who presided over the Christians in the greater cities of the several provinces: One such city there was in each province, in which a Roman governor resided, and administered justice, &c. on account of which circumstance, there was greater resort of all persons to it, and it was accounted of greater dignity. To the bishop of this city, it was thought proper to give the precedence among the bishops of the province; he was appointed to preside in their provincial meetings for consultation and dispatch of the business that arose in, or concerned, the particular churches of the province. To him, as Metropolitan, with the other bishops of the province, an appeal lay from the bishop
and

and consistory of each church: And he, with their consent and assistance, had the right of ordaining particular bishops, and installing them, after they had been elected or approved by the people of their particular churches. This plan of government obtained pretty early in the church; some traces of it appear in the second century; and if it had been duly and regularly adhered to, it might have been very conducive to produce good effects. But this was prevented by the disproportioned exaltation of the bishop of Rome above all the rest. Several circumstances contributed to this exaltation: That bishoprick had been founded by the two chief apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul, who both are said to have suffered martyrdom there; and the faith, which they had planted, was, in the first ages, well preserved in that church, of which also many of the earliest bishops had likewise died for the faith of Christ. On these accounts, a good deal of respect was paid to it; but the thing that contributed most to the great increase of it's dignity, power, and influence, was, the supereminent grandeur of Rome, the most potent and wealthy city then in the world, and the seat of almost universal empire. The bishop there being at the head of a numerous church, the oblations and other revenues from the people were so large, as to be sufficient for the maintenance of a number of clergy after the empire became Christian, and afforded funds for the hospitable reception of any bishops or clergy that came thither in distress from other places, even during the times of persecution. The bishops of that city having the easiest access to the emperors and their ministers, had accordingly a proportionable influence in many affairs. As there was the greatest resort to that city, of Christians as well as others, from all parts of the empire, he had the best opportunities of knowing the state of the churches in all the provinces; he had information how the faith and the discipline was generally observed, on which account he was frequently consulted by other bishops, and sent them directions about various points: And the bishops of that See, after having been for some time used to do this, by degrees claimed a right to do it, to give their arbitrations and decisions in points of difference between bishops, and required a sub-

mission to them. They took it ill that any churches should differ from theirs in any circumstance of the worship. Pope Victor proceeded so far, as to excommunicate the eastern churches for not observing Easter as the church of Rome did. Pope Stephen quarrelled with the churches of Africa and others, for rebaptizing those who had been baptized by heretics; and, at length, that church pretended to have the final judgment and decision of all affairs upon appeals that were to be made to them from all parts of the church. And though these encroachments, where they had no real authority, were not taken well by the churches, or persons concerned, who charged them with pride and usurpation, (as St. Basil, Firmilian, and St. Cyprian) yet they were countenanced and supported in these practices by the council of Sardica, which granted them authority to order a rehearing after the sentence of a provincial council, in some cases, even beyond the bounds of those, that were called the Suburbicary churches, which were all that were at first under the jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome, considered only as a Metropolitan. These proceedings of the popes were farther supported, by a law made by the emperor Gratian, A. D. 378, 379, in which he declares, that "whatever bishop
" is condemned by the judgment of pope Damasus, assisted by six
" or seven bishops, and yet persists to retain his See, shall be
" forced by the proper civil officers, to repair to Rome, under
" prosecution, &c.

AND the pope, called St. Leo, in A. D. 448, obtained a yet stronger rescript from the emperor Valentinian the III^d, against Hilary, bishop of Arles, by whom he was opposed.

INDEED, it is true, even after this law, that pope Zozimus and others, were strongly opposed by the council of Carthage, at which St. Austin was present, and many other bishops, who would not submit to the demand of the bishop of Rome, that he might be appealed to after a judgment passed by a provincial council, and wrote a sharp letter to him, now extant, remonstrating the groundlessness and iniquity of his proceeding.

BUT that unhappy church was soon after ruined by the irruption of the Vandals, and the church of Arles in France was forced

forced to submit, as that of Milan in Italy had done before, to the authority of the pope; which went on increasing, till, by the donation of the temporal patrimony of St. Peter, and the other support that See received from Pepin and his son Charlemagne, it became above any ecclesiastical opposition or controul; pretending that both as successor of St. Peter, and by the sanction of temporal authority of the Roman emperor, the pope was at the head of all ecclesiastical affairs, and might judge of, and determine, them as he thought fit.

Now though the canons of the church alone might not be sufficient to give him such a right, yet, perhaps, the imperial laws might do it, in regard that the emperor had made the civil establishment. But then it is also true, that those imperial laws were no longer in force for this purpose than the empire itself subsisted. When that was broke in pieces, the several kings of the kingdoms, which rose out of its ruins, might have made what alterations and abridgments they thought fit in the bishop of Rome's ecclesiastical authority, in their respective dominions. But none of these princes did any thing of moment in this matter; most of them were too ignorant and superstitious: They, in general, submitted to the claims the bishops of Rome made to an authority, not only of settling articles of faith, and of judging of every thing done in opposition to them, but every thing that related to religious worship and discipline, and to all transgressions relating to them, by clergymen, and even by laymen every where. They claimed a right to nominate bishops, and to fix the extent of their dioceses, and even to dispose of the revenues of them. To give exemptions from their authority, in favour of other religious foundations of their own making or approving, and to oblige the subjects of the several sovereigns to go out of their dominions, to councils. We see instances of all these things in the time of our Saxon kings, who hardly opposed them in any thing, except in the case of archbishop Wilfrid, and even in that, the See of Rome at length carried its point. William the Conqueror, indeed, though favoured in his enterprise against this nation, by the pope of Rome, yet shewed a spirit or disposition

to

to resist, if there should be occasion: And his son and successor William Rufus yet more, in his contests with archbishop Anselm. But Henry I, on account of his disputable title to the crown, was forced to give way; and Stephen also, who for the same reason was obliged to submit to the insolence of the pope's legate. But Henry II, having a better title, and as good a spirit, contended strongly with archbishop Becket, about the articles of Clarendon, and for a time gained his point; though, after the death of archbishop Becket, which the pope imputed to him, he was forced to give them up again and undergo a shameful penance. His son John, was still more hardly used, being himself excommunicated, and the realm put under an interdict by the pope, till the king submitted to resign his crown, and made it tributary to the pope. And his son Henry III. suffered all the clergy to be made so, to an extremely oppressive degree. They could hardly live upon their spiritual incomes, so reduced as they were by payments to Rome, and the best of the preferments the pope disposed of to bishops and others of his own court, who never resided, nor, if they had, did they know any thing of the language, so that they were unable to instruct the people, who were at once deprived of their spiritual food and of their temporal wealth. We find doleful complaints of these oppressions and abuses in Matt. Paris. But in that reign the nation began to be in some degree sensible of them, and their devotion and affection to the See of Rome began to decrease. Some gentlemen combined, and made a general seizure and spoil of all the effects that belonged to the Italians, which, though Henry III. disavowed, yet he was thought to have connived at it. But so terrible was the power of the pope at that time, on account of what he had done to other princes, that this timid king owned he dared not oppose it. However, happily for this nation, his son Edward I. was of a different spirit. When the pope had forbid the clergy to contribute any thing to the public service, and they were superstitious enough to obey him rather than the king, the latter locked up all their barns, and, soon after, holding a parliament without them, he put them out of his protection. He made one of his subjects abjure the realm for bringing in a bull of ex-

commu-

communication from the pope against another subject. Coke 5th Rep. He seized the temporalties of the archbishop of York, for not admitting a clerk into a benefice which the pope had before filled by provision, and, in the 25th of this reign, a statute was made against the pope's giving benefices to Aliens:

BUT the statutes abovementioned were less effectual than they ought to have been, by the connivances of our kings at the non-execution of them; so that still appeals to Rome were prosecuted, with great expence, delay, and vexation to the subject: Great sums went out of the kingdom for bulls, dispensations, &c. from Rome: Many strangers were permitted to enjoy, and be non-resident upon, benefices here, to the great damage of the people; the pope's legates were permitted to enter and exercise judicial power, and they, with the Monks, were the great occasions of the rigorous proceedings against heretics, on all occasions.

THESE things, if they had been the only ones, were so great grievances, that the nation had a right to reform them, and to throw off all correspondence with the pope of Rome if he refused to consent to it.

BUT, as I have shewn in the first and in the present tract, there were other yet stronger reasons which obliged us to leave the communion of that church, when we saw it persisted to impose on us the belief and practice of some things utterly unlawful. Our separation from it was then both lawful and necessary, and we are still under a strong obligation to continue it while the terms of her communion remain as they are. And, even though they should be altered so as that we might lawfully comply with them, yet, I have shewn, we should be under no obligation of so doing; because the authority which that See exercised anciently over this kingdom, having no foundation in the Scripture, stood only upon ecclesiastical canons or customs, or imperial edicts, which were no longer obligatory to this nation, than we thought fit to admit them: And as we are now happily delivered from them, we have great reason to stand fast in the liberty with which the divine providence hath made us free, and not be again entangled with that yoke of bondage which was so long heavy upon our deluded ancestors.

T R A C T V.

An answer to the objections to the ill use which, it is alledged, has been made, of the liberty we have gained, by having broke with the See of Rome.

THE reasons which induced the king and parliament of England to throw off the yoke of the See of Rome, and resume the Christian liberty of judging in all matters of religion, have been shewn in the foregoing tracts. It is requisite now, that answers should be given to those objections, that have been suggested by the abbot of L—— and others of his church, concerning the ill use we have made of the liberty we gained, by having broke with the See of Rome. In the first place then they charge us with sacrilege, for having taken away the lands and tithes that have been consecrated to God, and for still retaining them in lay-hands. They alledge, that it is plainly a dictate of natural reason, that men may consecrate things to the more particular service of God. As being the maker and preserver of the world, and lord paramount of all things in it, he needs no donation to make any thing his; yet, as he has given the temporary use of them to mankind, therefore, when they devote and solemnly set apart any of the things, which by his gift are theirs, to his honour and service, he may, by such donations, be conceived to acquire, as it were, a new property in them, which he may be willing to accept and retain. That he would do this, all nations have thought: To this purpose Seneca very well says, that all things indeed belong to the gods, but all are not dedicated to them: Sacrilege has place in those things only, which religion has appropriated to the deity [a]. And this general belief of mankind is confirmed by many passages of the holy Scripture [b]. Upon these grounds the Scripture considers the taking away

[a] Sacrum sacrove commendatum qui clepserit rapseritque, parricida esto. Cic. de Legg. lib. ii.

[b] 1 Sam. i. 11. 1 Chron. xxix. 14. Malachi, iii. 8. Prov. xx. 25.

things

things thus consecrated to God, as a robbing of God; and reckons it to be a crime not less heinous than idolatry. Now the lands and tithes, of which the church of England was deprived at the pretended reformation, had been with the greatest solemnity devoted to God, by those persons who had a full right to do it. This appears from all our historians, and our lawyers acknowledge it; and therefore the taking them away from the church was plainly sacrilegious, and utterly indefensible: Nothing but repentance and restitution to the utmost of our power will procure the pardon of this national sin. In answer to this charge, thus made by Romish authors, we freely allow, that things may be consecrated to God, as well under the Gospel, as under the natural or Mosaic law; and that the donors of church lands and tithes, who made those donations with due solemnity, had an intention of devoting the things to God's service for perpetuity; but we deny that all things so consecrated to God, do thereby always become really his property, so far as to be for ever afterwards unalienable to other uses. May it not be said with truth, that no private person, nor even sovereign, can consecrate things to God, beyond the life of the persons consecrating? He has no right in them farther, and therefore cannot give them to God for any farther time; succeeding sovereigns and legislators will have the same right to dispose of them that he has; now God cannot be supposed to accept of more right in them than the donor had to offer. It must likewise be observed, that no legislators, at any particular time, had a right so far to consecrate any lands, as to put them out of the power of future legislators; succeeding ones would always have the same right as they to judge whether these lands were really disposed of for the service of God and the public; for if the things so consecrated, be not really conducive to the service of God, and the interest of religion, then it is justly presumable, that he never accepts them at all. Or if they be conducive at first to his service, but afterwards, by a change of circumstances, become unserviceable or detrimental to religion, it is then in like manner justly to be presumed, that God gives up his title and interest in them; and any suc-

ceeding legislature has a right to resume them. Now on these grounds, we may judge of the alienation of the lands that belonged to the abbies, and other such monastic societies in England. Most of these were founded at first in superstition, upon false notions of the efficacy of masses and prayers for the relief of persons out of purgatory; these notions were invented and encouraged by the monks; so that the validity of the original donation, grounded upon false facts and impostures, and supported by stories of apparitions and miracles, might justly be questioned.

To which consideration, we must add, that they were increased to such a number, as to be disadvantageous to the civil welfare of the nation, and detrimental even to religion itself.

By the 13th century after Christ, the clergy of this realm were possessed of a third part of the lands it contained. This engaged too many to enter into the monastic life, in which they were useless to the defence and commerce of the nation, which was thereby much weakened. Of this Bede was sensible in his time, and therefore proposed, in his epistle to arch-bishop Egbert, that some courses might be taken with the religious houses, which increased then too fast; they were likely to hurt the nation, by diminishing its military force, and hindering the advancement of its trade, by the vast quantity of treasure which lay dead there.

But they were also greatly detrimental to religion itself, in some cases, by their known immoralities; and yet more by their inventing, propagating, and keeping up, often by tricks and impostures, false and superstitious notions of religion, tending to delude men to rely upon wrong practices, and to corrupt their morals; for the monks always espoused the interest of the popes against the princes and bishops, under pretext of defending the liberty of the church.

As the monks found their advantage greatly in these notions, it would not have been possible to have brought them off from them by any interposals of the ecclesiastical or civil power, as long as those societies had remained: Nor would it have been less difficult to have suppressed the papal influence and authority, of which they were the principal supports; and they supported it so powerfully,

powerfully, as often to distress the kings and the bishops of this nation as well as of others, by suggesting to the popes the thought of obtaining the supreme temporal, as well as spiritual dominion in Europe; but no one who judges rightly of the true interest of religion, can think it would have been desirable, that the popes should have compassed this point, or even that the clergy should have continued to enjoy the same wealth and power they then had in England. This would naturally have drawn upon them envy and ill will, from many among the laity, who would have been desirous to lessen their grandeur. This was attempted several times before the reformation; the kings then protected them, but could not have done it long; under this free constitution, the laity must at length have been too hard for them. The only way for the clergy to support themselves, effectually, as well as to do good in a free nation, is to make themselves respected and beloved by the laity; and the best way to do this, is not to carry on a separate interest from them, but to make it plainly appear that they desire to do them good in their spiritual interest, and to be upon the same bottom with other subjects, and to concur with them in promoting the common temporal welfare of the state. This, indeed, the Protestant clergy have strong motives to do, and none of any weight to the contrary; attempts, or plain designs to aggrandize themselves too much, would prove ruinous to them. Now since the like ill effects must have been produced, had the clergy continued in the same obnoxious state of grandeur and wealth that they were in before the reformation; and as the continuance of the monasteries would have greatly contributed to the continuance of false doctrine, superstition, and spiritual servitude at least, if not of temporal too; upon these accounts, it was certainly for the real interest of the nation, and even of the Christian religion itself, that the clergy should lose some of that wealth, which had been so improperly heaped upon them. And this being the case, it was justly supposable, that God, who always wills that to be done which is really best, was not disposed to retain any longer his property in those lands, which might have arisen from their consecration, but was disposed to approve

such an alienation of them as was then expedient: By consequence, the legislature had sufficient authority to make such an alienation. It would, indeed, have been right, at that time, as bishop Latimer advised, to have applied some of these lands to acts of charity, and to foundations for promoting learning: Such foundations were then much wanted; but this want has since that time been sufficiently supplied; there have been more works of real charity and public good done since the reformation, than there had been for several ages before it. The thing that was at that time the least defensible, and may seem to affect us most at present, was the alienation of the great tithes of very many parishes into lay-hands; this was to the disadvantage of religion, and, in all appearance, contrary to the intention of its blessed author, by whose inspiration St. Paul determined, that, as the Jewish priests lived of the altar, so the Christian clergy should live of the Gospel; that is, they should have proper maintenance from those they taught. Accordingly the primitive Christians gave even more largely than the tenth of their income to that purpose. By their example, our Saxon ancestors determined to apply the tenth part of the product of their lands to the maintenance of the clergy; this was done with the most solemn forms, and confirmed by several succeeding princes. Now since the dedication of a tenth part of the product of the land, for the maintenance of Gods ministers, was a thing fit in itself to be done; since our kings and parliaments had a full right to make the dedication; since they actually made it, and the grant, as being reasonable, has been very often confirmed by the legislature; since it always continued to be as reasonable, and as much for the service of religion, as it was at first, under all these circumstances; can it justly be thought, that our legislators had a right, at the reformation, to alienate any part of these tithes into lay-hands?

THE chief pretence upon which it was done, was, that these tithes had been unduly appropriated to religious houses, and might therefore be justly taken away as well as their lands; but it ought to have been considered, that this appropriation had been made only by the popes, who had no real authority to make it, and
who,

who, indeed, greatly injured the parochial clergy by so doing; to these latter, therefore, the tithes ought to have been restored at the reformation, especially when they lost a great part of their income, by the suppressing of masses and obits, &c. the contrary course to which, of giving these tithes into the hands of lay-men, was certainly a blemish, which, I must own, I cannot undertake to justify. However, I do not presume to determine that the government sins in permitting them to be held, or that the gentlemen, possessed of these tithes, are guilty of sin in holding them, and great mischiefs and confusions might follow if these bargains were set aside; for this reason, even the popish clergy, in Queen Mary's time, consented, by a solemn act, that the possessors of these tithes should continue to keep them, and in so doing, they must have supposed that God would consent to it too, which, indeed, there may be some grounds to presume; but then it must also be supposed, that however God may excuse the possessors of these tithes, for retaining the main part of them, he will expect that there should be some competent allowance made out of them to the vicar, who does the duty. With this charge or burthen they were at first given; and though the bishops may not now have the power by law, as they formerly had, to cause such an allowance to be made to the vicar, yet the proprietors ought to think themselves obliged in conscience to do it, or the parliament is to make them do something in this way. Lord Bacon, *Resuscit.* part i. p. 188, had reason to observe, as he does, that all parliaments, since the 27th and 31st of Henry VIII, have seemed to stand obliged to God, in conscience, to do something for the church; but it must at the same time be allowed, that our nation has gone some way towards freeing itself from this obligation. There is a fund arising from the first fruits and tenths, granted by the late Queen Ann and her parliament for this purpose, that will in time make some better provision for the poor clergy. This fund consists of about 15000 l. *per ann.* from whence about 60 livings are augmented every year, besides those that are each year augmented in conjunction with private benefactions; and so in process of time, all the small livings in England will come to be augmented.

In the mean time, there is no reason for the jealousy that some gentlemen have entertained, that this fund will make the clergy too rich; when there is any ground for such an apprehension, it may justly be diverted to some other purpose; but till then, it is very justly employed to wipe away the blemish of the reformation.

THE second objection of the Romanists against our ecclesiastical constitution, is made to the want of regularity and competent authority in our sacred ministry. They say, that it cannot have any real efficacy to the purposes of religion; because our pretended holy orders have not been derived, as they ought to have been, and as those in the church of Rome have actually been, by an uninterrupted personal succession of bishops and clergy from the apostles of our Saviour, *i. e.* from himself. This succession, they say, was broken among us in the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

FOR the new bishops, then made in the room of the deprived ones, and from whom our present orders have been derived, would have been unjustly intruded into their Sees, even if they had been duly consecrated; for the Catholic bishops who were then justly possessed of those Sees, were causelessly and unjustly ejected, and by an incompetent lay authority only; and so the new ones could not have had a just title to them, even if they had been duly made and consecrated bishops.

BUT they were not in reality so made or consecrated. For,

FIRST, the pope's consent to its being done, which was necessary in conformity to ancient custom, and canonical right, was not obtained or asked.

SECONDLY, they were not consecrated by any bishops, who themselves had really the episcopal character, but by a priest or two in a clandestine and indecent, if not profane, manner; so that their episcopal authority was, in truth, derived only from the king's great seal, which, though it was thought sufficient by Cranmer, and some others of our principal reformers, will hardly be now deemed to be so by any good Christian; such an original defect of character and authority can never be made good by such

a length of time as hath passed since that fact; nor have any of their successors been really true English, or Christian bishops. They likewise object to the Protestant clergy, their having the improper liberty of marriage.

IN answer to these objections, I must first observe, that those, who are said to have been Catholic bishops here in England, at the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, were justly deprived of the Sees they possessed, not only because they refused to acknowledge the Queen's ecclesiastical supremacy, which they ought to have done, as I shall presently shew [c]; but also, on account of several great errors in religion, of which most were of a practical nature, viz. transubstantiation, the adoration of the host, the sacrifice of the mass, with the invocation of saints and angels; all which I have plainly shewn to be contrary to the Scripture, and which they persisting to avow, the civil government had, therefore, a right to deprive them of their ecclesiastical stations and emoluments under its establishment; it needed no authority besides its own, which was entirely competent and sufficient for this purpose.

As the Queen had also a right to nominate other bishops to succeed them, without any consent of the pope. He had, indeed, by the indolence or connivance of our princes, for a long time exercised a pretended right of confirming the nomination, which our kings made of persons who were to be consecrated bishops: But first, he had no other pretended ground for this right, but some ancient canons and customs about appointing bishops, and the authority which they were to have, which were no otherwise obligatory to us, than as we received them, and which, therefore, might be at any time discontinued, and laid aside by the legislature, when they were become detrimental to the nation. Secondly, if the pope had had any real right from thence, yet he would have lost it, and all other his rights over this kingdom, by persisting to maintain transubstantiation, and other gross and pernicious errors [d], and by unjustly excommunicating the Queen and nation.

[c] Traet of Supremacy to be considered.

[d] I have before shewn, that even upon the foot of the canons of Nice, or any other,

tion, for not allowing him that supremacy and jurisdiction here, to which he had no longer any right, farther than they would allow it, and which he had used, as I have shewn, very oppressively and ill, so that it might justly have been denied him till he should use it better. The Queen therefore did rightly, in resuming and exercising that right of nominating bishops, which had been long in the crown of England, as well as in that of others; but neither she, nor her ministers, thought that the royal great seal was that only which gave those bishops their spiritual authority, or that there was not the intervention of any preceding bishops requisite for that purpose. The representation which the Papists make of all our reformers, as having crude and false notions of ecclesiastical authority, is not true. Arch-bishop Cranmer, indeed, and some others, might not at first have quite just thoughts of this matter[e]; and it is no wonder, considering with what heat and violence things were carried at that time about religion; but he afterwards corrected his judgment about it, and agreed with those divines of that time, who asserted, that there was an original and constant difference between civil power, and ecclesiastical authority, which last could only be derived from Christ and his substitute; that is, from the ordination of the latter with the consent of the people, and not from any civil sovereign merely as such. This was the doctrine published by Henry the Eighth's command, in The institution and erudition of a Christian man, and which was followed by arch-bishop Parker, and by Cecil and others, who had the chief direction of ecclesiastical affairs in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign. And that Queen herself appears to have been of this judgment from the xxxix articles, and from her declaration

other, England was not within the pope's metropolitan or patriarchal jurisdiction; so that he had no right to confirm our bishops.

[e] They seem to have thought that the king, merely of himself, had authority sufficient to make all ecclesiastical officers, as well as civil ones; but this authority, as I have shewn, does not originally belong to the sovereign as such. The Scripture and apostolical institution, as well as the reason of things, placed it wholly in other hands, unless they consent to transfer the nomination and right of superintendence to sovereigns, for as long a time as they shall use this right well.

about.

about them published not long after the beginning of her reign; they might not, perhaps, think that the affair of the uninterrupted succession of bishops was of so great moment, that, if it could not have been had, the want of it would have annulled all ecclesiastical ministration; but they probably thought, that, as it had been an ancient apostolical institution, continued and practised through all ages of the church, it ought, for the sake of regularity, order, and peace, to be adhered to as far as possible. Accordingly they took all the care they could, that the new bishops, nominated by the Queen, should be consecrated by other bishops, against whose episcopal character, and their having been formerly consecrated, there could be no just exception: This was the course anciently taken in the isle of Cyprus, where the suffragan bishops always consecrated their own metropolitan, and were maintained in their right of doing it by the council of Ephesus.

Of such bishops there was a sufficient number, who were willing to assist in this work; to some of whom the Queen directed her commission and mandate, to consecrate archbishop Parker; and, in pursuance of it, four of them acted in it, viz. bishop Barlow, bishop Scory, bishop Coverdale, who all had been formerly possessed of episcopal sees, and bishop Hodgskins, who had been only suffragan bishop of Bedford. The first, and the last of these bishops, had been consecrated in the reign of Henry VIII, by bishops whom the church of Rome allows to have been rightful and sufficient ones, and by the ordinal used in the church of Rome itself. Hodgskins was consecrated 9th Dec. 29 H. VIII, by John Lond. John Roff. Rob. Afaph †. Of bishop Barlow's consecration, indeed, the acts are not to be found; but the Romanists cannot, on this account, with reason, deny that he was ever consecrated: For, at that rate, they may as well deny that bishop Gardiner of Winchester, and several others were ever consecrated. The acts of their consecrations are lost as well as Barlow's, and why then should they admit them to have been duly consecrated any more than Barlow? If they say that they were always publickly taken and acknowledged for bishops duly consecrated; so was Barlow. His leases were allowed

† See *Lindsay's Masen*, p. 319, ex registro *Cranmer*, f. 204.

to stand good, &c. The other two bishops, who joined in consecrating arch-bishop Parker, were Scory and Coverdale. Both these, indeed, had been consecrated in the reign of Edward VI, by an ordinal different from that of the church of Rome; and the Romanists, pretending that this ordinal was defective, object against them on that account. They say it was defective, because there was no mention made in it of the power of offering the sacrifice in the mass, and because it was made by lay-authority only.

BUT there is no ground for the objection relating to the sacrifice; for the ancient ordinals of the Romish church had no mention of the sacrifice: The consecration was made only by imposition of the bishops hands, and prayer to God, as Morinus allows; both which that ritual of Edward VI. had, and the Greek rituals to this day have no more, notwithstanding which they are allowed by the church of Rome. Indeed, there is very good reason to think it probable, that the sacrifice in the mass, as now offered in the church of Rome, could not be mentioned in the ancient rituals as necessary; because I have shewn it to be unlawful in itself; and therefore it was an advantage in Edward the VIth's ordinal that it wanted it.

NOR was it any just objection, that it did not expressly mention the consecration to be for the office of a bishop; for several circumstances in it plainly shewed it was for that office. The alteration made after the restoration, by expressly mentioning the office of a bishop, was chiefly to answer an objection of our Protestant dissenters: The ordinal, therefore, was not defective in itself, nor was it the worse for the share the parliament had in ratifying it. For it was at first drawn up by six prelates, and six other persons learned in the law, who were appointed by the king; and good kings in the Scripture had a right, and did use to appoint forms of religious service*.

I HAVE also shewn in my third tract, that kings, who make a public establishment of religion, have a right to do this: So that the ritual of Edward VI, was not the worse for the concurrence of the king and parliament in it. By this ritual, Scory and Co-

* See Lindsay's *Mason*, p. 184. Courayer, tom. iv. p. 21.

dale were consecrated both in one day, by arch-bishop Cranmer and bishop Ridley †. So that Barlow, Scory, Coverdale and Hodgskins, were all of them duly consecrated bishops; and by all these four, who every one laid their hands upon his head, was arch-bishop Parker consecrated arch-bishop of Canterbury, in Lambeth chapel, on Monday Dec. 17th 1559. This appears from the register of Canterbury, which is now extant, and bears all possible marks of authenticity. This register was in arch-bishop Parker's time referred to, by an act of parliament made 8 Elizabeth, chap. i. Stat. at large, tom. i. p. 815. The author of the life of Parker, published at London 1572, of which several copies are extant (I have seen two, one in the library of Westminster, and one in the hands of the bishop of Durham) in relating the confirmation and consecration of him, and the other bishops after him, marks in the margin, that they were drawn from the register. In A. D. 1586, these registers were referred to by F. Thynne: See Holinshed's Chron. p. 1491. They were produced by arch-bishop Abbot, to some Romanists in king James Ist's time, who permitted them to peruse them; and there was no reason to have produced them before that time, because the fact of their having been consecrated by Edward VIth's ritual was not contested; but only the validity of their consecration, supposing it to have been performed according to that ritual. This evidence from the registers, concerning the fact of consecration, was confirmed in king James Ist's time, by the earl of Nottingham, who declared in the house of lords, that he himself was present at arch-bishop Parker's consecration at Lambeth. Consequently, the fable of the nags-head ordination, invented and published by Holywood in king James Ist's time, was plainly as false, as in many circumstances it appears to have been absurd. So that it is evident, that the new bishops in Queen Elizabeth's time, from whom the present succession is derived, were duly consecrated.

AND there was no reason to pretend, as the Romanists do, that the spiritual character of our bishops and clergy were, or are

† See Lindsay's Mason, p. 182, who quotes the register of Cranmer, fol. 237.

made worse, or blemished, by their being married; for a state designed by God for mankind in general, even while they were in paradise itself, can never be impure in a moral sense. In the Mo-
saic law, which insisted much upon outward purity, it was allow-
ed to the high priest himself.

IN the New Testament, marriage is declared to be honourable in all ||; and the bishops are expressly allowed to be the husbands of one wife†, although, in times of persecution, St. Paul did not advise it to them, or even to Christians at large; yet there is no intimation, that, in quiet times, the clergy ought to be under an obligation to celibacy.

IN the third and fourth centuries, indeed, celibacy was magnified by some, and, in the fifth century, enjoined by others; but it was not universally practised. In the eastern church, marriage was allowed, and celibacy of the clergy did not obtain generally in the west, till the ambition and usurpation of the popes, having drawn to themselves a power over most of the great preferments, allured or forced most of the clergy upon celibacy. Wharton, p. 50.

THE true reason why the popes were so intent upon gaining this point was, because they thought the clergy, having no wives or children, would be more dependent upon their see. This made them connive at the immorality and incontinence of the unmarried clergy, which was so great, that even pope Pius II said, that the clergy ought to be allowed to marry [f].

INDEED, in the views of policy, this conduct of the see of Rome was expedient for its own grandeur; but this consideration is of great force, to shew that the marriage of the clergy is far more to the advantage of civil states, than their being in celibacy; in regard that the former contributes to increase the people, makes them better subjects to civil government, than the latter; and, at the same time, more exemplary to their fellow subjects. Upon which, as well as other accounts, all princes and states in their petitions and remonstrances for reformation, constantly desired

|| Heb. xiii. 4.

† 1 Tim. iii. 2. Tit. i. 6.

[f] See also St. Bernard, quoted by arch-bishop Parker, in Anselmo, p. 186. edit. London 1729.

the clergy might be permitted to marry. (Wharton 167.) Accordingly, the marriage of our clergy is so far from being an objection to our establishment, that it is a recommendation to it.

THE next objection of the Romanists to our ecclesiastical constitution, relates to the declarations which they say our laws make, that all the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of our bishops flows originally from the crown; to the practice of our common law courts in restraining the exercise of it by prohibitions; and to the king's judging in the last resort by appeals to his delegates of all proceedings in it, which delegates, and even other judges in ecclesiastical causes, though they be only laymen, yet are allowed to excommunicate persons before them in judgment.

FIRST, one must allow that there are, indeed, some general declarations in acts of parliament, particularly 37 Henry VIII. ch. 17, that all spiritual as well as temporal jurisdiction flows from the crown. But these declarations may fairly be understood only of the bishops jurisdiction, *in foro contentioso*; or that which is supported by temporal penalties, or relates to any matters which were, by the civil state, submitted to the cognizance of the clergy, viz. matters matrimonial, testamentary, of tithes, &c. for the jurisdiction as to these doth certainly flow from the crown of this realm: But the acts of parliament cannot, with reason, be supposed to mean, that the bishops, as church governors, have absolutely no other jurisdiction than what they derive from the crown; because Henry VIII, who passed those acts, expressly owns, in one of his commissions to the bishops, that they had some authority in sacred matters, derived from Christ. The acts mean only the jurisdiction exercised by them as bishops, under the public establishment in England; in which respect the exercise of it *in foro conscientiae* may not be but by the leave and power of the king within his dominions. And this consideration shews how reasonable it is, that the king's temporal courts should have, as they ever had, an authority to controul and limit the ecclesiastical jurisdiction, by granting prohibitions: For, as Bracton observes, if the ecclesiastical court was to judge for itself finally what causes belong to it, there might be danger of its assuming many that did not belong to it, as actually happened in France.

THEREFORE

THEREFORE it is reasonable, that the king's common law courts, as being the superior, should prohibit the ecclesiastical ones from proceeding, till they be satisfied that the latter have a right to proceed. Even arch-bishop Peckham allowed this to be just; and, in fact, the course has always been to grant prohibitions, if not from the court of common pleas, which some have doubted, yet certainly, from the king's bench and chancery. However, if these courts find that the cause is of ecclesiastical cognizance, they are, by law, obliged to grant a consultation, upon which the ecclesiastical court proceeds; and it is no just objection, that appeals lie in the last resort from the ecclesiastical courts to the king in chancery, who, by his delegates appointed under the great seal, may determine finally whether the ecclesiastical court has proceeded rightly or not. It is reasonable he should have this authority; because, as the civil state gives the public establishment to the church, and vests her with several authorities, to which she would not be otherwise entitled; the crown is, by the legislature, entrusted to judge finally, whether the terms of his establishment be complied with by the clergy and others; and whether the authority, vested in the clergy, be well used or not. For if he had not this judicial authority, his establishment might be perverted and corrupted, and his subjects might be aggrieved and unjustly used without remedy, which ought not to be. Accordingly, by our ancient constitution, this authority of judging all ecclesiastical causes upon appeals was originally vested, if not in the crown, yet certainly in the highest court. There are instances of it in the Saxon times. It was strongly asserted by our kings in the case of arch-bishop Wilfrid. It was expressly asserted and reinforced by Henry II, in the council of Clarendon. Afterwards, indeed, the pope of Rome, by very artful conduct, and by taking advantage of the indolence, or the superstition, and bad titles of our kings, usurped, and, for a long tract of time, even down to the reformation, exercised, more or less, the jurisdiction of hearing and determining causes upon appeals in matters ecclesiastical. But their doing it, tho' it was suffered by our kings, was always considered by our lawyers as an usurpation; and accordingly this branch

branch of the royal supremacy was justly reasserted and recovered at the reformation; has ever since been in the crown, and will not justly be blamed by those who duly consider the reason of the thing, and our ancient constitution.

NOR will such persons blame even the authority allowed to the royal delegates and other judges, though they be only laymen, to excommunicate persons in judgment before them. In order to understand the true meaning of our laws, in giving this authority to mere laymen, we must consider, that, for some ages before the reformation, the schoolmen and canonists of the church of Rome had distinguished ecclesiastical jurisdiction, as it is coercive, and has its effect *in foro exteriori*, from the power of the keys, considered as productive of spiritual effects *in foro interiori*, or *foro conscientiae*; and while they confined the latter of these effects to the clergy alone, they allowed laymen to be capable of the former, if they were duly commissioned to it by one who himself had ecclesiastical jurisdiction, especially by the pope. It would be easy to shew, from numerous passages of the schoolmen, particularly Gerson, that these were their notions, and that these notions were reduced to practice. The monarchy of Sicily is a famous instance. Now this being the current notion and practice of the times before and about the reformation, it is no wonder that Henry VIII, who was a great admirer of the schoolmen, should go into it, and that his parliament and clergy should follow him; both of them, however, meant that excommunication, when exercised by laymen, should have no other effect than it had before, *i. e.* it should be only valid *in foro exteriori*. The chief difference they intended to make was, that whereas, before the reformation, this authority was derived to laymen from bishops, or from the pope in the last resort; it should, after 37 Henry VIII. chap. 17, be derived ultimately from the king alone. It was not conceivable, that these lay delegates could, by their excommunications, affect any man's spiritual state in the sight of God: They could not either retain sins, so as to make him an object of the divine indignation, or cut him off from the invisible church of Christ: They could affect him no otherwise in his spiritual state, than by excluding him from

from the communion of the outward visible church, and thereby hindering him from the outward visible means of grace, as a prince may do by keeping a subject closely imprisoned. And one may presume this to be the same of the royal delegates and other laymen, who excommunicate at present: They only mean to exclude the excommunicated persons from the visible church, and subject him to some temporal penalties and incapacities: And, supposing them to mean no more than this, there cannot remain any just objection to our ecclesiastical establishment from this practice.

But the Romanists object farther, that the oppressions put upon the clergy in their judicial capacity, though very great ones, are yet less grievous than those which they suffer in their spiritual authority, being prevented from making regulations in spiritual matters, which are necessary or expedient for the welfare of the church as a society and not allowed to meet together in order to make canons or constitutions without the leave of the king; nor, when they have, by the king's licence, made any canons or constitutions, however useful or necessary they may be, will the law allow them to be obligatory even to the clergy, without the king's confirmation under the great seal; nor to the laity without a confirmation by parliament. These are restraints plainly inconsistent with the rights which Christ has given to the governors of his church, as a spiritual society formed for the purposes of religion.

Now in answer to these objections, one must acknowledge that, by the 25th of Henry VIII, chap. 19. the legislative authority of the clergy is put under those circumstances of subjection to the royal authority, which the objections mention; and that, by a judgment not long since given by the judges of the King's bench, in the case of Middleton and Croft, it has been adjudged and settled, that canons, made by the clergy in convocation, do not bind the laity, unless they be confirmed by parliament. But none can affirm that these restraints upon the clergy, are either contrary to the design and institutions of the Christian religion, or to the ancient and right constitution of this realm.

I HAVE allowed, indeed, in my third tract, that every part of the Christian church, when it is unestablished, has a right to meet

meet when it is neceſſary, and make regulations for itſelf, provided they be not detrimental to the civil ſtate. But I have ſhewn that when it has been eſtabliſhed, it ceases to have theſe rights of meeting and making canons without the conſent of the civil ſovereign; and that its canons, when made, cannot be legally valid without the ſovereign's conſent. Now, agreeable to theſe maxims, have anciently been, and are at preſent, the ſenſe and practice of our Engliſh conſtitution. A law of Ethelred, in the Saxon times, ſays, “*Prudentes erant ſapientes mundi, qui eccleſiaſticis legibus*” “*adjunxerunt leges ſeculares ad diſciplinam populi.*” The eccleſiaſtical laws in thoſe times, were, indeed, generally firſt digeſted by the clergy, in their ſeparate aſſemblies; but afterwards they were moſtly brought into the Witenagemotes, which were mixed aſſemblies of the king, the clergy, and laity, and were enacted by them. This circumſtance implied, that the clergy and canons would not have been reckoned ſufficiently obligatory to the laity without the concurrence of the civil legiſlature. Parker, *Antiq.* p. 180. ſpeaking of ſome conſtitutions made by arch-biſhop Anſelm, in a ſynod at London, about A. D. 1109, ſays that, “*hæ*” “*constitutiones ſtatim ſpretæ et contemptæ fuerunt. Obſtitit etiam,*” “*ne canones hujus ſynodi, legum vim et poteſtatem fortirentur,*” “*ingens inter regem, (Hen. I.) et Anſelmum diſcordia et conten-*” “*tio de eccleſiarum inveſtituris orta.*”

It is true, that, about Henry the Second's reign, when our Engliſh clergy, like thoſe in other nations, in purſuance of the papal ſchemes, had ſeparated themſelves as much as poſſible from the laity, the former began to claim and exerciſe an authority of making canons by themſelves only, and of impoſing them as legally binding to the laity, even without their conſent. Arch-biſhop Arundel had enjoined, in one of his Conſtitutions, that no one, “*authoritatem decretorum, decretalium aut constitutionum*” “*provincialium, poteſtatemve condentis eadem in dubium revocet,*” “*ſive contra determinationem eorumdem doceat: Contrarium*” “*aſſerens pœnas hæreſeos incurrat.*” *Gibſon's Codex*, p. 407. And Lynwood more expreſſly ſays, that, by provincial conſtitutions, all men of the province, as well laity as clergy, were obliged. And

indeed, this authority seems to have been not much opposed, or rather to have been, in some cases, allowed, both in the courts of justice in Westminster-hall, and in the parliament itself, from the time of the clergy's holding separate councils from the laity, down to the time of the reformation. For in the cases of the prior of Leeds, and the abbot of Waltham, in the Year-book H. VI, the judges expressly allow, that the clergy in convocation have authority to appoint fast days and feasts, by which the laity, no doubt, were then thought to be obliged without any confirmation or authority from the crown. The communion in one kind was then settled by a provincial constitution, and not by act of parliament, &c. But still these cases, in which their constitutions were allowed to bind the laity, were very few; and even in them the nation reckoned the laity to be bound, only by the voluntary submission to, and acceptance of, them by the king and parliament, and not by any acknowledged authority in the constitutions, as being, of themselves, legally binding to the laity: For if the nation had acknowledged a binding force in the constitutions, as of themselves, upon the laity, then they must have acknowledged all such constitutions to be binding; but this they would not do, even with respect to constitutions, in what was allowed to be *res ecclesiastica*: They refused to pass the foreign canon about legitimating persons, born in ante-nuptial fornication: They would not allow the constitution for tithing wood of more than twenty years growth [g]. Therefore it is plain, that they reckoned only such canons to be valid, as had been expressly or tacitly accepted, and allowed by the civil legislature; so that they went always upon the principle, that *quod omnes tangit, ab omnibus approbari debet*. However, as the authority that had been assumed by the clergy to make canons, had some appearance of having been exercised in their own right only, and was productive of false notions in the people, and of other inconveniences; on these accounts the legislature, in the reign of Henry VIII, determined to put a restraint upon this authority, assumed by the clergy in convoca-

[g] See arch-bishop Boniface's canons, 1244.

tion. They were required to submit, and agree, that for the future, they would not either meet, or treat, in order to make canons without the king's licence under the great seal; nor when they had made any canons, would they promulge them, or pretend that they were valid in law. With a like confirmation under the great seal, and according to the terms of this their submission, the 25th Hen. VIII. chap. 19 was made. Whether, by that statute after such confirmation, their canons were intended to be legally binding to the laity, without act of parliament, has been a question among the learned in our law. Some have thought that canons so confirmed, must have been intended to bind the laity; because this statute 25 Henry VIII. chap 19, was made according to the submission of the clergy, and in that submission, it was supposed the canons of the clergy, as they had before bound the laity in divers cases, so they should still bind them in the same, when they were made with the king's consent. They say, that this was so understood by divers eminent lawyers amongst us, as well common as civil and canon. And that the practice was accordingly, during the reigns of Edward the Sixth, Elizabeth, and James the First, down to the troubles of Charles the First. But on the contrary, others have maintained, that it was the ancient constitution law of the realm, that the laity could not ever legally be bound without the consent of their representatives in parliament: That the authority assumed by the clergy, to bind the laity by their canons, had been only suffered and connived at, not approved or enacted: That the words in 25 Henry VIII. chap. 19, were merely negative, or, at most, carry only an intimation, that the canons of the clergy should, indeed, be binding with the king's consent; but do not express whom they should bind, whether the laity, or only the clergy; and that if there was any practice of this kind in queen Elizabeth's time, for their binding the laity, it was owing to the authority vested in her by parliament, to make, with the clergy, constitutions and injunctions binding to the laity; which authority none of our kings or queens have since legally had, except in some few particular cases, as the appointing fast days, occasional forms of prayer, &c.

As the lawyers of this latter side seem to have better reasons, so their doctrine has long since had a sanction given to it by a solemn judgment in the King's-bench, in the case of Middleton and Croft, who have determined that no canons of the clergy, even though confirmed by the king under the great seal, if they be not also confirmed by parliament, do bind the laity. If therefore the Romanists could from thence justly object to our constitution, we must confess that the fact is as they represent it. But I don't conceive that they can from thence make any advantage against us; for I have shewn, that this is a right which every sovereign does, or may acquire, by granting a civil establishment to a church, as our legislature does to the church of England. The legislature might, indeed, have vested the king with such an authority, that canons, made by the clergy, and confirmed solely by him under the great seal, should be binding to the laity; but they do not seem to have done this, and it seemeth better for the public interest, and even for that of the clergy themselves, that they have not done it; for in a free nation, as ours is, where many persons differ from others in their religious notions, canons made by the clergy, without confirmation by parliament, would never have been well submitted to, or obeyed; whereas, when they are so confirmed, they will meet with no dispute, nor will the parliament, or the laity, have any jealousy of the clergy; but will be more ready to give a sanction to any of their canons, that will be really expedient to the interests of religion.

BUT the Romanists urge further, that the king and parliament have an authority, by our constitution, to make laws about matters of great moment, relating to truth and practice in religion, without the consent of the clergy, and even against their will; which authority they may use if they please, to make pernicious alterations in religion, and to deprive the clergy for not conforming to them, without any canonical judgment; which deprivation they have unjustly inflicted on divers occasions.

FIRST, to this I answer, that as the law now stands, the king, though he can appoint new occasional prayers, &c. not repugnant to the liturgy established, yet cannot make any alterations as to any thing

thing of moment in religion, without the consent of his parliament. Secondly, nor can even the king and parliament declare any thing to be heresy, besides what is already so by law, without the assent of the clergy in convocation. For this provision is made by Elizabeth, and that law is, among the others provided for the security of the church of England, declared fundamental to the union between England and Scotland, and never to be altered [b]; so that if any part of the union be unalterable, we have as much security as can well be had in matters of religion. And we further have a large toleration, so that any persons may, as far as human laws are concerned, break off from the established religion, if they, with reason, disapprove any part of it; so that neither the authority of the crown, nor the legislature, do put any force upon men's consciences in matters of religion, as to the deprivation of the clergy, by king and parliament, without canonical authority. It is true, that if any clergyman, under the establishment, maintains any material error contrary to the doctrines of it, or otherwise offends against religion or the state, he is, indeed, liable to be deprived of his bishoprick or benefice, even by the civil power alone, as several of the bishops and clergy were at the beginning of Q. Elizabeth's reign, and at that of K. William III.

BUT neither this authority, nor these proceedings can be justly objected against: For I have, in the third tract, plainly shewed, that every sovereign, who makes an establishment of a religion, must, of course, have this authority. And it was very rightfully used, on both the abovementioned occasions, to deprive the bishops and clergy; because they obstinately persisted in maintaining errors of great importance as to religion and to the civil state.

BUT the Romanists object farther, that in pushing on our liberty since our schism, we have not only invaded those that may be called the secular rights of the church, but have even thrown off some of the greatest privileges and advantages of a spiritual kind, which are plainly derived from the gospel of Christ.

WE have, in the first place, discarded private confession to a priest, for the pardon of our sins, and satisfaction or penance in

[b] See the act of union.

consequence of it, very necessary for preventing much worse sufferings in a future life; together with extreme unction, a sacrament instituted plainly in the holy Scripture, and designed for our support and comfort in going out of life: All which practices being visibly of very great importance, our throwing them off argues a high disregard to the gospel of Christ, and to our own spiritual interest, as well as to that of our people; and no Christian, who hopes for salvation, ought to be of such a church. The Romanists affirm, that one of the greatest and happiest discoveries, which the gospel of Jesus Christ hath made to the world is, that to those who are Christians, God will, at all times, forgive their sins, how many or great soever they have been, upon their true repentance. And he has ordained, that this pardon shall be dispensed by the clergy of his church, without whose ministry, when it can be applied to, he will not grant it. With his twelve apostles, and with their successors, he promised to be to the end of the world. Our Saviour expressly said, *Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven* [a]. And again, to the same effect, *Whosoever sins ye remit, shall be remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they shall be retained* [b].

IN order to the clergy's duly exercising this authority, it is plainly necessary, that men should confess their sins unto them in such a manner, that they may be judged to be truly penitent; and, as a proof of their being so, they are obliged to submit to such works of penance, as the priest, to whom they confess, thinks fit to impose upon them. Indeed, this submission will always be greatly to their advantage: For our Saviour, who remits to penitent Christians the eternal punishment of their sins, does, in case of all sins committed after baptism, reserve some temporal punishment to be undergone on account of them, either in the present state, or in the intermediate state between death and the resurrection; which latter sort of punishment will probably be much more severe, than any that can be endured in this present life. It is therefore

[a] Matt. xviii. 18.

[b] John xx. 23.

Tract V. *And the ill-Use we are supposed to have made of it.* 247

greatly for the interest of every one to undergo present penances for their sins, or to do what the church ordains in commutations for them, in order to obtain those indulgencies, or shortnings of the time of sufferings in purgatory, which the church has authority to give. These considerations shew plainly, how greatly in the wrong the church of England is, for laying aside the use of confession and penance, and indulgencies; nor is she less in the wrong for having discarded the sacrament of extreme unction, which was designed for the support and comfort of the soul, in its passage out of this life. This sacrament is plainly instituted in the Epistle of St. James, which says, *That if any one be sick, let him call for the elders of the church, and they shall anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord*[c]: Upon which, if the divine providence sees fit, he shall be raised up to health again; or if not, yet at least his sins shall be forgiven, and fresh supplies of grace and consolation shall be afforded him. These are such plain as well as great advantages, that it shews a judicial blindness and hardness of heart in the English Protestants, to have rejected them. To these charges thus laid by the Romanists on us of the church of England, we answer:

FIRST, that private confession of sins to a priest is not, by our church, in any case forbidden to any person, or advised. But it is not indeed enjoined to any person, or in any case; it is left wholly to each persons discretion, and this with good reason; because the injoyning it universally, as is done in the church of Rome, would have been a very great burden, as even Bellarmine confesses; and might be attended with very ill consequences, both to public states and to private persons, especially to the female sex. These dangerous consequences certainly make it greatly desirable to be at liberty to practice it or not, at every man's discretion, if the Scriptures of the New Testament allow this liberty; and that they are far from imposing this burthen of the necessity of confession upon any one, we shall easily see, by considering the passages of Scripture alledged by the Romanists, to prove the ne-

[c] James v. 14.

cessity and obligation upon every Christian, to confess all his sins to a priest, with all the circumstances of each of them. Our Saviour does, indeed, tell all his apostles, that, *Whatsoever they should loose on earth, should be loosed in heaven* [d]: He farther promises, that, *Whosoever sins they should remit, should be remitted unto them; and whosoever sins they should retain, should be retained* [e].

BUT if we consider the attributes of God, and the nature and design of the Christian religion, can we imagine that Christ intended to vest this high authority in the clergy of all ages, of whom none are infallible, and many have always been, and will be, corrupt and ill designing? is it agreeable to the perfections of God to suppose, that he makes the eternal salvation of so great a part of mankind depend on the acts and dispositions of men like themselves, either corrupt, or at least fallible? would he vest men with an authority, which, properly speaking, can have no effect? and must not this be the case of merely human absolutions or condemnations? If a sinner be truly penitent, he will certainly be absolved by God, whether a priest absolves him or not; and if he be not really penitent, the absolution of a priest will do him no good. This authority, therefore, being of little or no use, is it supposeable, that God should vest it in fallible men? No; it is less so, because it must naturally be productive of ill effects; it may dispose some weak and corrupt men to have an undue reliance upon it, and thereby make them less disposed to true repentance; and it may put some bad priests upon making a corrupt use of this supposed authority, to promote their secular interest, and to reduce men to an undue dependance upon them; these considerations make it highly probable, that God did not intend to vest this authority in the clergy of all ages, nor indeed even in the apostles themselves; who, though they were vested with divers miraculous gifts of the holy Spirit, yet do no where, in the holy Scriptures, appear to have exercised or laid claim to this authority of absolving men from their sins after baptism, upon confession and repentance. They seem to have referred this high part

[d] Matt. xviii. 18. [e] John xx. 23.

wholly to God, declaring that they themselves would not, and exhorting other men that they should not, judge any thing before the time; but to wait for the righteous judgment of God. The true sense of the texts in St. Matthew xviii. and St. John xx. relating to this matter, seems to be, that the apostles were intrusted, by Christ, to make known to mankind the gospel terms of eternal salvation; especially that great and necessary doctrine, that whosoever should believe in Jesus Christ, and heartily repent of his sins, how many or great soever they might have been, and amend his life, shall be pardoned by God, and be eternally saved: And, on the contrary, whosoever shall not believe, and not duly repent, shall be damned. Thus God will judge mankind according to their gospel; and by preaching it at God's command, and, by his authority, they may be said to save both themselves and those that hear them, and even, on the contrary, to retain the sins of those men who are impenitent, in the same manner as the prophet Jeremiah is said *to destroy and root out nations, and to restore them* [f]. The meaning of which is, that he let them know, by divine commission, the terms, upon disobeying or obeying which, they should be destroyed or preserved. As this sense of the text abovementioned best agrees with the attributes of God, and the design of the gospel; it certainly ought to be received; and if so, there is no ground at all for that necessity of private and particular confession of sins, or that authority of absolving men, which the Romanists insist upon.

BUT even if there were any ground for necessity of confessing sins to priests, there would be still none for their imposing as they do penitential works, as being necessary to the complete remission of sins. This doctrine, concerning the necessity of these works, is without the least foundation in the Scriptures: These always represent God as granting a full and absolute pardon to mens sins at all times, even after baptism, upon their true repentance and amendment. The declarations to this purpose are very frequent, and as full and express as possible, in the New Testa-

[f] Jeremiah i. 10.

ment. There is not the least mention that any temporal suffering is reserved to be undergone, either in this life or the next, in the way of satisfaction for the sins so pardoned; on the contrary, these sins are represented as intirely and perfectly done away by the sufferings of our Saviour, embraced by faith, and followed by repentance. Now it is a known maxim, that all declarations of pardon and advantage ought to be understood according to the natural and full extent of the terms in which they are made. If God had intended to put any restraint upon them, or to have reserved any temporal punishments on account of them, he would certainly have said so in very clear terms; which not having been done, there is no reason to suppose he meant it. There are, indeed, several passages in the Scripture, which represent men sometimes to undergo temporal sufferings in consequence of their sins which have been pardoned: But these sufferings are not inflicted as penal satisfactions for those same sins that have been pardoned; but only as occasionally laid upon men, when God sees it proper, either for their trial and improvement in virtue, or for example to others; which are ends quite different from the satisfactions which the Romish doctrine supposes to be necessary; and, if this doctrine of penal temporal satisfactions for sins pardoned, upon true repentance, be groundless and false, the Romish doctrine about indulgencies and purgatory falls to the ground: For indulgencies are supposed to be alleviations which the church has authority to grant with regard to the measure or duration of those penal satisfactions, which, if no such be required, are plainly usurpations of groundless authority, and designed only to heighten the gains and influence of the clergy. And the same thing may be observed of their doctrine and practice about extreme unction. There is, indeed, a passage in St. James, which at first sight gives some ground for this [g]; but that passage plainly referred to the case of miraculous cures: It was not to support men in their going out of life, but to restore them to it, when divine providence thought fit. When these miraculous cures ceased in the church,

[g] James v. 14.

there

there ought to have been an end of such unctions: But as men are apt to be attached to external forms, this was continued for some time in hopes of relief in the way of cure; and when that hope ceased, the clergy were not willing to let it quite go, because it gave them an opportunity of being about sick and dying persons, of which they made great advantages; and so they pretended, without any ground from Scripture, that this practice would be attended with spiritual internal graces, and erected it into a sacrament for perpetual use, without any ground from the Scripture. Upon the whole, we have reason to be very thankful, that we are free from these groundless impositions, so burthensome, and attended with such ill consequences.

BUT the Romanists object farther, that we have hardly any ecclesiastical discipline for the correction or restraint of vice; and yet much less, or none, for the punishment or prevention of heresy, infidelity, or schism; all which are now at a greater height in England, than they ever have been in any Christian country. Unbelievers have remarkably increased there since the Revolution in 1688, without any thing considerable having been enacted, or at least carried into execution, against them; and the separation of those Protestant sectaries who dissent from the church of England has been even encouraged; for several laws made against them in queen Anne's reign, viz. the Schism and the Occasional conformity acts have been repealed: Nor have the bishops taken proper care to oblige them to subscribe to the Thirty-nine articles of the church of England, which is a condition of the toleration. There is likewise an act passed every year, which, in effect, takes off the obligation and restraint arising from the Test act; and they have been permitted, if not publicly encouraged, to propose many and great alterations in the liturgy, &c. of the church of England; which, with some other concessions, actually gives them more liberty, in several respects, than even the clergy of the established church. From whence they have been led to hope, that they may, in length of time, prevail against the national establishment of religion in the church of England, either by quite subverting it, or forcing themselves into it without forsaking their own tenets. And,

while the sectaries are thus indulged and cherished, the severe laws against Roman Catholics have been suffered to remain, and their estates have been subjected to new pecuniary impositions; all which things shew the great iniquity of our proceedings, which, indeed, is such, that there is reason to believe that the providence of God will not suffer such an establishment to be lasting, but will, in his own good time, restore the Roman Catholic religion here, till which there will be no firm quiet or happiness among us.

IN answering to these objections, we cannot deny, but that vice is at a great height among all ranks of men in this nation, notwithstanding we have laws, as well ecclesiastical as civil, to restrain it; for in a nation of so much freedom, and so much wealth in private hands, such laws can hardly ever long be strictly executed. Men of rank and fortunes will excuse and connive at each other; and against such persons the laws, whether ecclesiastical or civil, are with great difficulty put in execution: But it may be alledged to the advantage of our nation taken in general, that it hath as little of any sort of vice as the other greater nations; it hath certainly much less of the malignant vices of revengefulness, murder, oppression, &c. And the expence our countrymen are at in gratifying their sensual appetites does not hinder them from being, at the same time, very charitable to all who are in want, or any kind of distress; which charity hath of late been remarkably shewn, even to the Roman Catholics of Portugal after the earthquake, and to the French prisoners among us; and there is otherwise a great deal of public spirit. We own, indeed, that such charity will not atone with God for our vices. Our clergy represent this to the people very strongly; they exhort them to virtue and regularity of life; but at present they cannot, indeed, do much more. Our ecclesiastical discipline hath now but little effect upon persons of rank; neither has it, indeed, much effect in France or Spain. It seems impracticable to restore such a form of discipline as obtained in the first ages of the church. St. Austin, even in his time, was sensible of this. When the temporal powers were come into the church, in such circumstances, mere excommunication, which is the only ecclesiastical penalty,

penalty, will have little or no effect upon men who do not value it; and therefore it is expedient, that it should be made use of with prudence and caution, and that men should, by reason and Scripture, be brought into a religious temper of mind, which temper, indeed, they must have, in order to please God.

BUT the Romanists say, that among us heresy, and even infidelity, are so very rife, that it is no wonder that Christianity has so little force to restrain ill practice; they have remarkably increased since the Revolution in 1688, without any thing being done to prevent or punish them. On the contrary, several persons who have professed and published, or abetted them, have been suffered to do it with impunity.

Now here one may justly say, that these allegations are not true. By our laws in force, no person can bear even any civil office without professing Christianity, even according to the doctrine and practice of the church of England. And, since the Revolution of 1688, there has been a law made for the punishment of open irreligion and heresy, especially against the doctrine of the holy Trinity. And this law is still in force; it has not indeed been strictly executed, for which omission I must own I am not sorry. You have seen my reasons in the second of these tracts. But the continual existence of this law in force shews, that our governors are not disposed to countenance heresy or irreligion, though they forbear to go to the utmost rigour against them; nor are there more grounds for the reproaches the Romanists make against our governors for encouraging and cherishing the Protestant dissenters, and their supposed ill designs against the establishment of the church of England. It is true, that, in the beginning of the reign of George the First, the Schism and Occasional conformity acts, which had been a little while before made against the Protestant dissenters, were repealed; because, the former was against their natural right, in taking from them the education of their children. Every father hath an obligation, and a right from nature, to take care of them, not only to provide for them the necessities of life, but proper instructions as to virtue and religion, as long as they are not able to judge for themselves. You will

say that they are the children of the Sovereign and of the public, who have a right to judge for them, and not the natural parent; but I say that the right of the natural parent was the original right, antecedent to any civil societies, or rights derived from them. The civil magistrate has no more a right to judge for the infants, than he has to judge for the adult parent of them: I have shewn he has not this latter right; and, if the parent has a right to judge for himself about religion, he must also have a right to judge for his infant child, who is a part of himself. There is no necessity derivable from the interest of civil societies, that the governors of them should judge for all infant children [b].

AND the other tended to make them more disaffected to the church of England, and less inclined to constant conformity with it, which there was, and is, some good probability, numbers of them may be, by the practice of occasional conformity, in time brought to, after having had opportunities, by this conformity, to wear off, and lay aside in great measure, their prejudices and prepossessions against its way of worship, &c.

THE only probable and effectual way to do this, is to treat them with candour and gentleness, or at least with justice; which last, they think, is still due to them, with regard to their not being obliged to subscribe the Thirty-nine articles of the church of England. 'Tis true, indeed, this was, at first, made, and remains, a condition of their being tolerated or indulged: But this condition was inserted into that act, when the nature of religious toleration had not been so fully considered as it has been since. The dissenters now alledge, that, as they have not the benefit of the civil establishment, nor do conform to it, they cannot justly be obliged to subscribe or assent to the articles of it: Whoever attempts to shew they have no right in this claim, will, perhaps, find it hard to maintain his purpose; so that our bishops are not justly blamed by the Romanists, for conniving, as far as they are concerned, at the dissenters not subscribing to the Thirty-nine articles; nor for their being willing that some concessions should be made even to the

[b] See Locke on Education.

Quakers, as to their being exempted from swearing in courts of judicature, and being relieved as to the manner of recovering tithes from them. The former of these concessions was made chiefly for the benefit of other subjects, whose properties often might depend on the legal evidence of Quakers; and the other proceeding as to paying tithes was likewise designed for the convenience and ease of the clergy, as well as of the Quakers.

If the dissenters have as great, and even in some respects greater, liberty than the clergy of the church of England, there are some circumstances which make this indulgence expedient to be granted; in particular that they may have no shadow of ground to complain of the want of any liberty necessary to their spiritual interest. But, as to the charge the Romanists make upon our civil governors since the Revolution, that they have given the dissenters encouragement to hope, that, by the favour and assistance of the government, they shall be able, by degrees, and in no great length of time, to prevail against the establishment of the church of England; this charge is made, not only without any sufficient evidence, but even contrary to known and remarkable fact; for a few years ago, when the dissenters had formed a design to procure the repeal of the Test act, and applied strongly to the then ministry and the house of commons, for that purpose, they found no encouragement from either of them. There were then among the king's ministers some of the ablest men that this age has produced, and who could not only judge extremely well of the domestic interests of this nation, but who were at the same time great friends to liberty, and to the moneyed interest in the city, in which last several of the dissenters had a considerable weight. Yet, notwithstanding these circumstances, those ministers would not be induced to favour the dissenters in their attempt against the Test; they may justly be supposed to have seen, that the consequence of the repeal of it would be adding great strength to the dissenters against the establishment; that it would enable them to come nearer to an equality of power with the church, and to push the ministry more strongly against it; and that such a state of things would

would either end in a subversion of the national establishment of the church, or contribute to the increase and continuance of religious factions, which are the most violent of any. Both of these, they saw, would, or might, be of extremely ill consequence; the contests would always continue, till one of the parties should get the superiority; and if that of the dissenters should obtain it, the civil constitution, in which the true liberty and happiness of the nation depends, would soon be weakened, and lose the balance that preserves it; for, by the prevalence of the dissenting scheme, the supremacy of the crown in ecclesiastical matters would wholly be lost, and the democratical spirit, which has been visibly growing very much for two ages past among us, would be very much, and probably too much, augmented; and in proportion to the increase of it, the respect to the crown, and to the nobility, would certainly decrease, at the same time, that the wealth, and consequently the great influence of the trading part of the nation upon the burghs, would be continually receiving additions. On these and other accounts, the ministry judged, that giving way to the design of the dissenters against the Test, and consequently to the growth of their civil interest and power, would not be for the interest of the Protestant establishment, considered in general; and accordingly they strongly opposed it, so that it miscarried in the house of commons, and has never since been attempted.

As for the proposals of the candid disquisitors, for making alterations in the liturgy, and form of public worship, in order to give some satisfaction to the dissenting laity, and engage them more easily to come into the church; one may truly say, first, these projects have not had their rise from the crown, or its ministers; they came from private persons, who, in that point, were more forward than they ought to have been, and discovered more zeal than knowledge of mankind, or of the true interest of the present establishment; it never appeared that they had any encouragement, either from the governors of the state, or of the church. It is probable, indeed, that hardly any ministry, that are true friends to liberty, and to the present establishment of the crown, and to the lasting good of their country, would be against them,

them, supposing they could be morally certain, that any considerable part of the dissenters would be wrought upon by them, to come into the church; or that these alterations could be made without occasioning animosities, discords, and divisions, among the members of our own church. Upon this prospect, it is probable, that not only the ministers of the crown would be disposed to give way to them, but even the bishops and clergy might be induced to do the same, for the sake of unity and peace. Several of the most eminent bishops, and other clergy of our church, have formerly, at different times, declared their judgment in this way, with respect to admitting some alterations; and the present bishops and clergy might, perhaps, be disposed to imitate their examples, if it were not for those very material objections against it, hinted at above, and which will be considered more at large hereafter in their proper place.

FROM what I have said, you may see that there is no reason, from any thing that hath been done among us since the Revolution, or the accession of the present royal family to the throne, to apprehend, as the Romanists insinuate, that there has been, or is, any design against our ecclesiastical establishment. And, as to their last charge upon us, that we continue the rigorous laws against the Romanists, and have, not long ago, laid some heavy impositions upon them, to the great diminution of their property, and the reasonable liberty that ought to be allowed them as Englishmen born; we can truly say, that these laws were originally designed, not so much against them on account of their religion as being false in itself, as to prevent those ill designs and attempts against our ecclesiastical and civil state, in which the temporal interest of their religion engaged them. It is well known what repeated and dangerous attempts of that kind there were in the reign of queen Elizabeth, and of James the First, which made it necessary for those princes to proceed with just severity against those bigotted Papists, devoted to the court of Rome, and, by making laws with severe penalties, to deter other Papists, in future times, from the like seditious and traiterous proceedings. But since this vio-

lent spirit has, in some degree, subsided among the Papists, and numbers of them have appeared willing to acquiesce under, and even to support, the civil establishment, not only in England, but even in Ireland; they have accordingly been treated with proportionable lenity and indulgence: They have not been hindered from a private performance of their worship, nor even from publishing books in defence of their cause; nor have the double taxes been strictly levied upon them: They have been treated with civility and respect, upon the foot of other persons of their rank. This has been acknowledged by the Vindicator of the Unerring authority of the church of Rome; and is well known to those who are acquainted with the state of things in England.

UPON the whole, we may truly say, that in England, at present, every one is allowed freely to inquire into, and judge as he sees fit, of all the grounds of his belief and practice, in matters of religion. He has all proper advantages and assistances from books, which are allowed to be published of all kinds, from the preaching of men of different sects, and from private advice, in order to his doing it with success: And he is allowed to profess and practice, and privately to worship God according to his judgment, whatever it be, provided it doth not tend to disturb or weaken the civil state.

THE terrible writ *De hæretico comburendo*, which always hung like a flaming sword over the heads of our ancestors, has been taken away ever since the reign of Charles II. And though, indeed, there are one or two other laws in force, that subject some persons, whom the law deemed to be heretics or unbelievers, to some heavy penalties; yet these are not now put in execution, nor are likely to be so, unless any men should, by their very great temerity and insolence, draw upon themselves a prosecution: Otherwise, if a man should be suspected, or known, to have some opinions which our church condemns as false and heretical; yet, if he behaves modestly, prudently, and quietly, there seems to be no disposition in the governors, either civil or ecclesiastical, to encourage informations or legal proceedings against him. He may continue in his opinions, and yet enjoy his property, his liberty, and all other benefits of other peaceable subjects.

Now

Now when one compares this state of things with that of other countries, where, as soon as a man is but suspected of heresy, he is informed against, prosecuted, imprisoned, and perhaps burnt alive, or at least banished out of the country, we may think ourselves very happy, in enjoying the liberty granted by the state to all professions of religion.

T R A C T VI.

The Nature of Supremacy in matters Ecclesiastical, vested in the Crown.

AS great weight is laid on the declarations, which, the Romanists say, our laws make, that all the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of our bishops flows originally from the crown; it will be necessary to enter into the discussion of this objection more minutely.

THE first point to be considered, is the nature of supremacy in matters ecclesiastical, vested in the crown by the act of 1 Eliz. chap. i. Now that the meaning of this act was not, as the Papists affirm, to declare that the king had a right to preach or administer the sacraments, or to ordain, or inflict church censures with spiritual effects, we may be sufficiently assured; because, that statute refers to, and revives those acts of Henry VIII, particularly 26 Henry VIII, chap. i. by which the ancient jurisdictions belonging to the crown were restored and united to it; and the king, having been acknowledged to be supreme head on earth of the church, was invested with full authority to visit, repress, and reform all errors, heresies, &c. These same words are used in the oath of supremacy appointed by the first of Eliz. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose, that this latter act is to be understood, as to the spiritual authority it intended to confer upon the crown, in the same sense with the former, (see Bacon on Governm. part ii. p. 161.) which, indeed, queen Elizabeth soon after declared in her Admonition, which was referred to and confirmed by an act of parliament. Now Henry the Eighth declared publickly, that he did not pretend, by this act, or by any other way, to have a right to administer the sacraments, &c. or to confer the same

right upon others: But, on the contrary, acknowledged, that the bishops and clergy derived these merely spiritual authorities immediately from Christ [i]. For in the Institution of a Christian man, published by the especial command of that king, and subscribed by twenty-one bishops, and many of the clergy; it is asserted, (fol. 39.) “that Christ and his apostles did institute and ordain, in the New Testament, that, besides the civil powers, there should be also continually in the church militant certain other ministers and officers, who should have special power and authority, and commission, under Christ, to preach and teach, to dispense and administer the sacraments, to consecrate the blessed body of Christ, to loose and absolve, to bind and excommunicate, to order and consecrate others in the same room and office.” And *ibid.* fol. 50. “We may not think that it doth appertain to the office of kings, but priests, to preach, teach, and administer the sacraments, to absolve, excommunicate, and do such other things belonging to the office and administration of bishops and priests.”

AND even, in the commissions by which some bishops in the reign of Henry the Eighth held their bishopricks of him during pleasure, and had his license to execute their spiritual functions, there is a clause, in which he acknowledges them to have a spiritual authority not derived from the crown, but from Christ. *Præter et ultra ea, quæ tibi, ex sacris literis, divinitus commissæ esse dignoscuntur**.

DURING the reign of his son Edward the Sixth, in the ordinal then composed for ordaining of bishops, the arch-bishop says to the bishop, who is to be consecrated, “Will you maintain and
“set forward, as much as in you shall lie, quietness, and love, and
“peace among all men, and such as be unquiet and criminous
“within your diocese correct and punish, according to such authority as you have by God’s word, and as to you shall be
“committed by the ordinance of the realm?” The bishop an-

[i] In a commission granted by king Henry the Eighth, to the bishop of Hereford, he is licensed even to ordain. But no prince ever pretended to convey the spiritual character; ergo, all that can be meant here, is, that the bishop is licensed to exercise this spiritual part derived from Christ, so as that it shall have a temporal effect; and the persons so ordained shall be acknowledged, by the state, in quality of priests.

* Apol. for the Clergy, p. 19. Lesley’s Regale, 62, 63.

swers, "I will, by the help of God." This office was, in the reign of Edward the Sixth, ratified by act of parliament: It was again expressly confirmed in the reign of queen Elizabeth, as indeed it had been virtually confirmed before, by that act in the first year of queen Elizabeth, which revived Edward the Sixth's book of common prayer.

Now Henry the Eighth, in the Institution of a Christian man, before quoted, (fol. 50.) says, "We must think and believe
" that God hath made Christian kings to be as chief heads and
" overlookers over the said priests and bishops, to cause them to
" administer their office and power committed unto them purely
" and sincerely; and, in case they be negligent in any part thereof,
" to cause them to supply and repair the same again:" Referring to which, the Queen, to the same effect, though more in general, says, "That her claim is, under God, to have sovereignty
" and rule over all manner of persons, born within these her
" realms and dominions, and countries, of what estate either eccle-
" siastical or temporal soever they be, so as no foreign power shall,
" or ought to, have any superiority over them." Accordingly, in the 37th of the Thirty-nine articles confirmed and authorised by that Queen in parliament, 13 Eliz. chap. xii. it is said, "We do
" not give to our princes the ministring of God's word or sa-
" craments, but only that prerogative which we see to have
" been given always to godly princes, in the holy Scriptures, by
" God himself; that is, that they should rule all estates and de-
" grees committed to their charge by God, whether they be ec-
" clesiastical or temporal; and restrain, with the civil sword, the
" stubborn and evil doers." From all which passages it is evident, that the authority attributed then to queen Elizabeth, by the oath of supremacy [k], was not properly spiritual in any case; but only to take care exclusively of any other sovereign or foreign power, that the clergy of this realm should do their duty by professing and practising themselves, and teaching the people, true

[k] To this same purpose, an explanation of it was given by arch-bishop Usher before, and by order of, the privy council of Ireland; for which explanation he had the thanks of king James the First. See Parr's life of arch-bishop Usher, p. 19.

religion; and, if they failed to do it, then to animadvert and inflict proper penalties upon them, viz. admonition, suspension, deprivation, &c.

AGAINST this account of the nature of the king's ecclesiastical supremacy, I am sensible that some objections may be raised from the expressions used in several statutes in the time of Hen. the Eighth and Queen Elizabeth, viz. from 26 Henry VIII. chap. i. which says, "that the king, &c. shall have full power, from time to time, to visit, reform, correct, and amend all such heresies and enormities, whatsoever they be, which, by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction, ought to, or may lawfully, be reformed, ordered, &c. any usage, custom, foreign laws, foreign authority, prescription, or any thing to the contrary hereof, notwithstanding". From 37 Henry VIII, chap. xvii. in which it is said, "that the arch-bishops and bishops, arch-deacons, and other ecclesiastical persons, have no manner of jurisdiction ecclesiastical, but by, under, and from, your royal majesty. § 16. Declaring its intent, that all the usurped and foreign power and authority, temporal and spiritual, may for ever be clearly extinguished, and never to be used or obeyed within this realm or any other of your majesty's dominion or country, May it please your highness, that it may further be enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, spiritual or temporal, shall, at any time, after the last day of this session of parliament, use, enjoy, or exercise any manner of power, jurisdiction, superiority, preeminence or privilege, spiritual or ecclesiastical, within this realm, or within any other your majesty's dominions or countries, that now be, or shall hereafter be; but from henceforth shall be clearly abolished out of this realm, and all other your highness's dominions for ever, any statute, ordinance, custom, constitutions, or any other matter or cause whatsoever to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding". § 17. "And that also it may likewise please your highness, that it may be established and enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that such jurisdictions, privileges, superiority, and preeminence, spiritual and ecclesiastical, as by any spiritual or ecclesiastical power or authority hath heretofore

Traet VI. Of the Ecclesiastical Supremacy vested in the Crown. 263

fore been, or may lawfully be, exercised or used for the visitation of the ecclesiastical state and persons, and for reformation, order, and correction of the same, and of all manner of errors, heresies, and enormities, shall for ever be united to the imperial crown of this realm."

FROM the 37 Henry VIII, chap. xvii. § 4. which enacts, "that doctors of the civil law, which shall be made chancellors, vicars general, &c. may lawfully execute and exercise all manner of jurisdiction commonly called ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and all censures and coercions appertaining, or in any wise belonging, unto the same, albeit such person or persons be lay, married or unmarried, &c. which act also, § 1. declares the king to be a layman [1]."

FROM the 25 Henry VIII, chap. xix. which enacts, "that in case of appeals to be made from the arch-bishops courts, (§ 4.) or from places exempt, (§ 6.) into the king in chancery, a commission shall be directed under the great seal of such persons as shall be named by the king's highness, his heirs or successors; which commissioners shall have full power and authority to hear, and definitively determine, such appeals, and the causes, and all circumstances concerning the same: And that such judgment and sentence, as the said commissioners shall make and decree, in and upon any such appeal, shall be good and effectual, and also definitive."

FROM 31 Henry VIII, chap. xii. § 23. which enacts, "that such of the late monasteries, &c. and all churches and chapels to them belonging, which, before the dissolution, &c. were exempted

[1] By the first and second of the canons of 1603, all clergymen are obliged to assent to, and maintain, all laws for the restoring to the crown of this kingdom, the ancient jurisdiction over the state ecclesiastical.—Ibid. Arch-bishops, bishops, &c. have no manner of jurisdiction ecclesiastical, but by union, and from your royal majesty.—Ibid. Your majesty, to whom, by holy Scripture, all authority and power is wholly given to hear and determine all manner of causes ecclesiastical, and to correct all vice and sin whatsoever, and to all such persons as your majesty shall appoint thereunto. See how far this act, which was repealed by Philip and Mary, was revived by 1 Elizabeth, chap. i. § 12.

from the visitation, and all other jurisdiction of the ordinary, within whose diocese they were situate, shall from henceforth be within the jurisdiction and visitation of such person or persons, as by the king's highness shall be limited or appointed." In consequence of which statute, laymen, in many places, became entitled to episcopal jurisdiction, by grants from the crown.

FROM 5 Edward VI, chap. iv. which enacts, § 2. "That if any person or persons shall smite or lay violent hands upon any other, either in any church or church-yard, that then, *ipso facto*, every person so offending, shall be deemed excommunicate, and be excluded from the fellowship and company of Christ's congregation." See Dyer, 275. Croke, Eliz. 224. 219.

AND from 3 James I, chap. v. § 11. which enacts, "That every Popish recusant convict shall stand and be reputed, to all intents and purposes, disabled, as a person lawfully and duly excommunicated according to the laws of this realm, until—and that every person, sued by such person so disabled, may plead the same in disabling of such plaintiff, as if he or she were excommunicated by sentence in this ecclesiastical court."

THESE statutes the Romanists are vehement in urging against us, as importing that all kind of spiritual or ecclesiastical authority and jurisdiction are united to the crown of these realms.

AND the Romanists are not the only objectors in this point. We have persons in England, who profess to be Protestants, and very zealous ones, who yet agree with the church of Rome, in alledging that these statutes fully prove the crown to be entitled, by law, to all kind of ecclesiastical authority and jurisdiction.

BUT these Protestant objectors would do well to consider, whether our laws, if taken in this sense which they contend for, may not be found to affirm things false in themselves, and to vest powers in the crown, repugnant to the institutions of the Christian religion. If this should appear to be the case, the civil sanction of these laws would not be sufficient to vindicate them. They will, notwithstanding that sanction, lie equally open to the objections of the Romanists, and be condemned even by many serious Protestants, who, upon their account, may become disaffected to
our

our whole establishment, and be liable to be drawn off from it by the Romanists; who indeed, upon that view chiefly, are so earnest in fixing this sense upon these laws. Every one, therefore, who is a true friend to our constitution, before he agrees with the Romanists in fixing this sense upon them, ought seriously to consider the consequence of it, viz. Whether our laws, if understood in this sense, will not affirm things false and wrong; and, if this will be the consequence, he ought from thence to be put upon considering, whether this be the necessary sense of them or not; or whether they may not fairly bear a different one. Not that one ought from these considerations to put a forced or unnatural sense upon the expressions in our laws; for that would neither take off the objections of the Romanists, nor serve to any other good purpose: But these considerations may be of some weight, *a priori*, if the expressions of our laws be doubtful, to induce us to think it probable, that the legislature could not mean them in such a sense; because it is not supposable, that they should have been mistaken in such important matters; and much less is it supposable, that they would, knowingly, pretend to vest such powers in the crown, as they were sensible Jesus Christ had granted to his clergy only.

WHETHER these considerations have occurred to our Protestant objectors I dont know: But that they may have a proper weight with you, added to those which have been abovementioned, in order to make you form a right judgment of the sense of our laws in this point, I must desire you to recollect what has been said in the first section of these papers, about liberty of profession and practice in matters of religion. I have there shewn, that every religious society, whose doctrine and practice are altogether inoffensive to the civil state, and which hath no establishment for it, hath a right to be exempted from any interposals of the civil governor, with regard to its doctrines, worship, or ecclesiastical government.

FROM whence it follows, that if the civil government in England has any such right of interposing, as our Protestant objectors suppose, in regulating the government and discipline &c. of our

church; it must be derived from the consent and concessions supposed to have been made by our church to the state, on account of the temporal advantages she enjoys from it.

AND there is reason, indeed, to suppose that the church has made divers such concessions.

SHE has consented, that the king's judges should send writs of prohibition to stop the exercise of her discipline in many cases, and mandates to absolve persons excommunicated in others; and that they should be appealed to from her sentences.

SHE has consented that our kings should exempt some persons and places from her jurisdiction.

THAT they nominate persons to be chosen bishops, and order their consecration: And that they and others of the laity should present persons to many spiritual cures.

THAT her bishops and clergy should not at any time meet or make any canons without the king's licence, and subsequent confirmation.

IN these, and perhaps in some other points, the church of this nation has made concessions to the civil government.

AND it might lawfully do so, for as long a time as the civil governors should make a right use of these concessions, viz. to the benefit of the state without hurting religion or the church. For that this they may do is evident: For instance, they may not use the power of issuing prohibitions to stop the exercise of the church's discipline, nor require any persons to be absolved in any cases, but when it is expedient so to do. They may not exempt any places from episcopal jurisdiction, but for weighty reasons; and in such cases it may be lawful for the church to forbear, for a time, the exercise of her discipline and jurisdiction; for though she has it by divine right, yet she is not obliged to exercise it at all times. It may sometimes be expedient to forbear the exercise of it, in view to obtain greater advantages to religion, by forbearing it.

IN like manner, though the church has a right to nominate her own officers, as bishops, &c. yet as the civil government may also nominate fit persons for those trusts, the church may lawfully

consent

Tract VI. *Of the Ecclesiastical Supremacy vested in the Crown.* 167

consent to receive them upon the state's nomination, as long as they nominate persons against whom there lies no important objection.

AGAIN, though the church has a right to make any proper regulations concerning her own spiritual affairs inoffensive to the civil state, yet, as the making such regulations is not at all times necessary, the church may consent that her clergy shall not meet, nor make any canons without the licence of the civil governor, nor that any of them shall be valid without his subsequent confirmation; for, as the making canons is not at all times necessary, it may at some times be forborn, for a considerable space of time, or subjected to the will of the civil governor, upon supposition that he will suffer it to be done when it is really expedient for the church.

As the giving up their power to the civil governor may be very expedient to the state, in order to its preserving a proper influence on the people, and hindering any undue practices from the clergy, if they should at any time be factious and seditious, to its disadvantage; so, on the other hand, there may be a real and great expediency to the church, that they should be given up, in order to gain or preserve the continuance of that protection and favour, and support those revenues, dignities, temporal powers, and other emoluments, which the church receives from the state, and which may be made very conducive to the maintenance and promotion of true religion. Upon this common expediency, I say, to the church, as well as to the civil government, the church may be lawfully warranted to make these concessions. But these ought not to be, as they often are, used as arguments of the civil state's having naturally and originally a right in church matters; because, as I have shewn, the state's right in these points is not original, but derived only from the concessions of the church: And farther, because there are some points in which the church neither has, nor can lawfully make, such concessions to the state.

ONE of these points is, the right of administering the sacraments in the congregations of Christians. That, the Thirty-seventh article says, we give not to our princes. This Jesus Christ hath ordained to

be done, by persons selected and solemnly set apart to that function; the doing it is appropriated to that sacred character, and cannot be committed to any that are not vested with it.

ANOTHER of these rights, incommunicable to the civil governors or to any mere layman, is, the right of ordaining or consecrating persons to these sacred functions. This right our Lord first exercised himself, in the choice of his apostles; and committed the same to them, with a command that they should appoint and ordain others, as these should still others, and so on in perpetual succession. As in the Jewish law the priesthood was to descend by generation, and no one was to take that office who was not so entitled to it; so, in the Christian religion, the like sacred function was to be conveyed by imposition of hands, by persons who had received that same imposition from others, and so on till it came at last from the apostles and our Saviour himself. This imposition of hands no one therefore can lawfully give, who has not received it; and therefore no civil governor, as a layman, can have this right to ordain others [m], unless he has himself received imposition of hands from a qualified person: And in that case he ceases to be a layman. I here speak of ordinary cases, where such imposition of hands from qualified persons is possible to be had. If it be not possible, then how far God may dispense with the want of it, is a different point. But, where it can be had, there is reason to think, that God having made this ordinance, will insist upon it, and so will not suffer laymen to be vested with this right.

[m] The 36th article in effect acknowledges this, when it saith that the book of consecration of arch-bishops, &c. doth contain all things necessary to such consecration and ordering, &c. The queen's Injunctions referred to by the 37th article, and that article itself, deny that the kings or queens of this realm may challenge authority or power of ministry of divine service in the church. Now, if they have not a right to minister themselves, can they have a right to ordain or qualify others to minister? *Nemo dat quod non habet*. What is the reason why they cannot minister themselves? Is it not because they have not been ordained to it? If that be the reason, the same will hold, why they should not ordain others. See Apology for the Clergy, p. 15, 16.

A THIRD

A THIRD point not possible to be communicated to laymen, is the authority to inflict ecclesiastical censures with spiritual effects. Jesus Christ having instituted his church as a society distinct from the state, and required that certain conditions should be performed, in order to men's being admitted and continuing members of it, and having instituted governors to see that these conditions be performed; he has accordingly vested them with a power of ejecting those persons out of the society, who do not perform the conditions required. This power was necessary to the maintenance of order and purity in the society; and therefore was conferred upon the governors of it. And, in order to give a weight to their censures, Christ has declared, that whosoever is bound by them on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever shall be loosed on earth shall be loosed in heaven. The meaning of which is, that when the governors of the society duly eject persons out of it, their censures shall be ratified in heaven; and the persons offending shall not be restored to the spiritual communion with Christ [n], even though he repent, unless he also offers due satisfaction to the church. But that, if he does repent, and also makes or offers due satisfaction to the church, so as to be absolved by it, then he shall certainly be absolved in heaven.

Now this right or power, which was given to the governors of the church, as necessary for the preservation of order and purity;

[n] That excommunication justly inflicted hath spiritual effects, our law allows; for article 33. says, "That that person which, by open denunciation, is rightly cut off from the unity of the church, and excommunicate, ought to be taken, of the whole multitude of the faithful, as a heathen and a publican, until he be openly reconciled by penance, and be received into the church, by a judge that hath authority thereunto." And see the passage of lord Coke's 12 Report, p. 79. concerning the difference between the civil and ecclesiastical judges, where he says, that corruption in the said spiritual and ecclesiastical courts is more dangerous than in the officers in the temporal court: For the temporal judge commits the party convicted to the jailer, but the spiritual judge commits the person excommunicate to the devil.

Before the Reformation, the legislature, upon several occasions, required the archbishops and bishops to excommunicate persons, viz. those who should violate Magna Charta, p. 527 of Coke's 2d Inst. and *ibid.* p. 536. See also Cotton's Abridgment, Index, voc. *Excom.*

in it, cannot, by them, be alienated or made over to civil governors; because they have no warrant in the Scripture to do it, and it is in the nature of the thing incongruous to do. For what reason could there be to suppose, that God should permit any spiritual effects to attend the exercise of this power by civil magistrates, to whom he has not only given it, nor warranted others to transfer it? Having been designed only to secure the purity and order of the religious society, it cannot warrantably be exercised by any but by the governors of it.

THESE, which are powers plainly incommunicable to princes, or any other laymen, shew that all spiritual power and jurisdiction is not derived from them.

OUR princes and our laws themselves acknowledge it. The office of ordination, 37th article, and queen Elizabeth's Injunctions, referred to and confirmed by parliament.

ACCORDINGLY they have never pretended to assume to themselves, or commit to any layman, the administration of the sacraments, or the ordination of pastors. And lord Coke acknowledges, that, if they should nominate lay-commissioners to exercise ecclesiastical censures, the nomination would be wrong or faulty.

THUS the reason of the thing, the declarations of some of our laws, and those the latest upon this subject, and common practice agree, in shewing that all ecclesiastical authority and jurisdiction is not derived from the crown, or united to it.

AND from hence we may justly conclude, that it could not be the intention of our legislators, in the acts of Henry VIII, and Elizabeth, abovementioned, upon which the Romanists and others ground their objections, it could not, I say, be the intention of those acts, that all ecclesiastical authority and jurisdiction is united to the crown, and derived solely from thence.

BUT what other sense can be put upon them, you will say, without a force upon the words? Does not 26 Henry VIII. ch. 1. say, that the king, &c. shall have full power to visit and correct all such heresies, &c. as by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction ought; or may lawfully be reformed? I answer yes!

He

Tract VI. *Of the Ecclesiastical Supremacy vested in the Crown.* 271

he may correct all such, by an external political coercive power, which, no doubt, he has in him.

BUT does not 37 Henry VIII. chap. xvii, affirm, that archbishops and bishops, &c. have no manner of jurisdiction ecclesiastical, but by, under, and from, his royal majesty? Yes [o]! and, tis true, they have none of this external and coercive jurisdiction, with temporal effects, but by and from his majesty's permission. And that, indeed, is all which the law considers as being properly jurisdiction; for though, indeed, the law does suppose, as I have above shewn from the ordinal for consecrating bishops, that they, the bishops, have some power derived from Christ for correction of others; yet the spiritual effects of that power not being visible nor cognizable by the temporal judges, they therefore never took any cognizance of them, but only of the temporal and visible effects of the bishop's power; this they only meant by lawful or legal jurisdiction [p], though even the bishop's jurisdiction, attended

[o] But then a later law, as I have above observed, does expressly allow, that they have some power to censure and punish by God's word: And the law ought not to be supposed to contradict itself; and therefore, this act in Henry the Eighth must necessarily be understood only of external coercive jurisdiction; and tis true that the bishops, &c. have none of this, &c.

[p] Jurisdiction properly signifies an authority to take cognizance of, and determine in, a public and judicial way, and with legal forms and effects, any controversies or causes that are litigated, and to censure or acquit any persons, according to laws before made concerning those matters.

Now, though the bishops and clergy have originally in themselves, derived from Christ, an authority to judge in church matters, and of persons as concerned in them; yet, since the establishment of Christianity in this realm, and as long as that lasts, they have no right to exercise this authority in a judicial way, in this realm, but from the king; because, by the supposed convention between the church, and civil government, by which the exercise of this spiritual authority is attended with temporal penalties and effects, which of itself it had not; it was agreed, that this spiritual authority should not be exercised in a public judicial way, but by the king's permission or consent, and with such limitation as he or the law should put upon it: And, in regard to this state of things, it may be properly enough said, that the bishops, &c. have no spiritual jurisdiction that is attended with legal effects, nor any that can be exercised here, but by and from the king's permission. And this is what our Laws mean.

This

ed with spiritual effects, they might consider as being also derived from the crown, in regard that the crown permitted the exercise of it.

THE same sense may be justly put upon 1 Eliz. chap. i. sect. 17. which asserts, that such jurisdictions, spiritual and ecclesiastical, as, by any spiritual or ecclesiastical power or authority, hath heretofore been, or may lawfully be, exercised or used for the visitation of the ecclesiastical state or persons, or for the reformation of all manner of heresies, &c. shall be for ever united to the imperial crown of this realm.

THE ecclesiastical authority formerly used for the correction of ecclesiastical and other persons, of which the law took cognizance, was, as I said, only the external and coercive authority attended with temporal effects. Of the spiritual effects, though they at the same time supposed there might be such, yet they would not take any notice, nor consider them at all; not even in the times when popery prevailed here. This appears from divers cases in the Year books, and particularly from the following remarkable one: There had been an appeal made to the pope in some cause litigated between subjects of this realm, and of ecclesiastical cognizance. The pope, having tried the cause, awarded costs to one of the parties, and sent a commission of delegacy to the archbishop of Canterbury, to cause them to be levied. The archbishop, upon the refusal of the party who was to pay them, excommunicated him for contumacy: The law, in those times, did, no question, admit that the archbishop's sentence of excommunication, when just, would be attended with spiritual effects; but whether it was so or not, or whether it was just or not in that case, the judges would not examine. It was a maxim in law, that the pope's excommunications, whatever spiritual effects they

This was plainly the sense of our judges, and of the legislators themselves before the Reformation: They allowed that the bishops, and the pope too, had a spiritual authority in several cases; this is plain, from the notion of the whole church at that time; but not that they should exercise this authority here, but with certain circumstances. And, if they did at any time exercise it otherwise, they regarded the exercise of it as null. This appears from several cases in the Year books.

might

might have, were not to be at all regarded by our law, nor suffered to have any temporal effects here; that is, he was not allowed to have any ecclesiastical jurisdiction in this realm; and though the arch-bishop, in other cases, had such spiritual jurisdiction by law, yet, in this case, as he acted in pursuance of the pope's commission and sentence, the judges would not allow even him to have any legal ecclesiastical jurisdiction [q]. What effects his and the pope's sentence might have *in foro spirituali*, the judges would not consider: But visible, legal, and temporal effects, they would not allow them to have any in this realm. This was the notion which the law had of spiritual or ecclesiastical jurisdiction long before the Reformation. And all ecclesiastical or spiritual power and jurisdiction, in this sense, is truly said to be united to the crown; and, indeed, to have always been in it. Which consideration made lord Coke, and others of our chief lawyers, affirm, that this [r] 1 Eliz. chap. i. was only a declarative law reviving and restoring the ancient ecclesiastical authority of the crown, and not adding any new authority to it. And this undoubtedly is true, if the act be understood in the sense I here put upon it, as asserting only an external coercive jurisdiction in ecclesiastical causes, to belong to the crown: For such a one was always affirmed and acknowledged to belong to it, even before the Reformation. But if this were to be understood to affirm, that all that internal spiritual authority, which Christ gave to his apostles and their successors, in every ecclesiastical matter, was inherent in, and could be justly exercised by, the crown or its delegates; 'tis most certain, that this was not the notion of any of our judges or legislators before the Reformation. Our laws did then most evidently suppose and assert the contrary. Since, there-

[q] They would not allow an excommunication by any of our own bishops to be of force, but against persons within his own diocese: Nor even in his own diocese, unless, in his certificate of it to the temporal courts, he specified the particular cause of it, that they might know whether it was legal or not.

[r] The act of 1 Eliz. chap. i. is intituled, An act to restore to the crown, the ancient jurisdiction over the estate, ecclesiastical and spiritual, and abolishing all foreign power repugnant to the same.

fore, this act is allowed to be only declarative of the ancient spiritual authority and jurisdiction of the crown, and not to vest in it any new powers; it follows, that it must be taken in the sense I have here put upon it, as asserting only an external, coercive, political authority in spiritual things, and over spiritual persons: And this authority may very truly, and consistently with the institutions of the Gospel, and with the spiritual authority from thence derived to the clergy, be allowed to our princes; so that, in this sense, there is no just cause for the Romanists to object against the supremacy in ecclesiastical matters vested by our laws in the crown of this realm.

NOR had those prelates in the first year of queen Elizabeth, to whom the oath of supremacy was offered, any just cause to refuse it. That oath asserted only, "that the Queen's highness was
 " the only supreme governor of this realm, and all other her
 " highness's dominions and countries, as well in all spiritual or
 " ecclesiastical things or causes, as temporal; and that no foreign
 " prince, person, prelate, state or potentate hath, or ought to
 " have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, preheminance or au-
 " thority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm: And, there-
 " fore, I do utterly renounce and forsake all foreign jurisdictions,
 " powers, superiorities and authorities, and do promise that,
 " from henceforth, I shall bear faith and true allegiance to the
 " Queen's highness, her heirs and lawful successors, and, to my
 " power, shall assist and defend all jurisdictions, privileges, prehe-
 " minences and authorities, granted or belonging to the Queen's
 " highness, her heirs and successors, or united and annexed to
 " the imperial crown of this realm. So help me God, &c."

By the Queen's being the only supreme governor of this realm, as well in all spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes, as well as temporal, might very fairly be meant only such a directive, coercive, political power, in all ecclesiastical causes as has been before asserted. And if the prelates of that time had rightly considered it, with all the other declarations that had been made upon this subject, they might have easily seen, that no more was intended than this.

INDEED,

INDEED, there was reason to believe they were satisfied that no more was intended, because many of them had taken an oath of the like nature, full as strong as this, in the time of king Henry the Eighth, required by 25 Henry VIII, chap. i. by which they renounced all the pope's jurisdiction here, and swore to acknowledge the king as supreme head, on earth, of the church of England; and to maintain and defend all the acts or statutes made, or to be made, in confirmation and corroboration of his majesty's power and supremacy, on earth, of the church of England; so that they could not well have any real scruples now about this oath to queen Elizabeth.

BUT whether they had any such scruple or not, as they had no real cause for refusing the oath, which was designed for a just security to the government, they might, with reason, be supposed to be persons disaffected to it, and might, therefore, be justly deprived of the ecclesiastical benefits and dignities they possessed.

BUT the Romanists object farther, that this deprivation of the bishops, in the first year of queen Elizabeth, was unjust in another respect, viz. because it was effected by the lay-power only, which has no right to eject bishops out of their sees. As they are consecrated to them by a spiritual authority derived from Christ, nothing less than the like authority can take away the right which they have to them, or dissolve the spiritual obligations, which the people committed to their charge are under to obey them. The act of the temporal legislature, therefore, by which only they were deprived of their bishopricks, was a sacrilegious violation of the rights of the church; and consequently, their successors were schismatical and unjust intruders into those sees; and, consequently, the succession of our present bishops, derived from them, is unjust, irregular, and schismatical.

IN answer to this objection, we affirm, that, whenever any bishops are really disaffected to the civil state, or otherwise notoriously unworthy of their sacred charge, and their fellow-bishops will not censure and deprive them, they may then be justly and effectually censured or deprived of their sees, by the civil power alone.

THIS authority to censure and deprive the bishops and clergy, when there is just occasion for it, belongs to the civil sovereigns of every state, on account of their being trustees and guardians of the public welfare, to the maintenance of which this authority is necessary. For, if the civil sovereign had it not, the clergy might, in some cases, be not only corrupt and heretical to a great degree themselves, and so the people might be infected by their example and instruction, but they might have so great an influence upon the people, as might effect, or endanger, the subversion of the civil government. They might raise, or foment, such notions or prejudices among them, as might, either directly or indirectly, make them disaffected to the government, and as disposed, as they might be able, to raise successful seditions and rebellions against it. If you think this not to be practicable, do but consider what has been actually done in divers instances.

FIRST, the authority of the Greek emperors in Rome, and a great part of Italy, was in a very short time almost wholly subverted by the artful management of the bishops and clergy of Rome, and their influence upon the people, in the dispute concerning image worship. The emperor Leo Isaurus having thought fit to interpose to prevent the worship of images, which was grown excessive and highly scandalous to the Christian religion, the people of Italy, who were much inclined to that worship, were so artfully applied to by the pope of Rome, and their zeal for the images, and against the profaneness of the emperor, as it was represented, was so much inflamed, that they very soon raised a sedition against his authority, pulled down his images, denied his tributes, and, in a little time, by the help of the Franks, entirely threw off all subjection to him.

How far the superstition of the people, and their attachment to the clergy may go, and consequently how able the clergy may be to distress the civil government, we have another remarkable instance in the case of Robert king of France, the son of Hugh Capet. This prince was of a good moral character; he, by the advice of an assembly of the bishops of France, espoused Bertha; who being *sa parente au quatrième degré*, the canon law did not
allow

allow him to marry her without a dispensation from the pope. Pope Gregory the Fifth being incensed, because he made no application to him for that purpose, threatened to excommunicate the king and Bertha, if he did not separate from her, and actually put the whole kingdom of France under an interdict, A. D. 1003.

“ A quoy les peuples defererent si humblement, (says Mezeray
 “ Abr. vol. i. p. 313. See also Droit Eccl. Franc. tom. i. p. 219.)
 “ que tous les domestiques du Roy, à la reserve de deux ou trois,
 “ l’abandonnerent, et on jettoit aux chiens tout ce qu’on desservoit
 “ de devant lui, personne ne voulant manger des viandes qu’il
 “ avoit touchées. Ces rigeurs le contraignerent de se separer d’avec
 “ elle. Mais ce ne fut que deux ou trois ans apres. Et on trouve
 “ qu’ils firent le voyage de Rome, soit pour y defendre leur cause
 “ devant le pape, soit pour luy demander pardon. Tant y a que
 “ le mariage demeura nul.” It is evident, that, if there had been
 other fit circumstances, the superstition of the people might have
 been easily wrought upon to dethrone this prince.

IN Germany, about the year 1076, the emperor Henry IV
 was excommunicated by pope Gregory VII, upon the quarrel be-
 tween them, concerning the right of giving investitures to bishops.
 “ Pontifex Augustum diris devovit, populum sacramenti et obse-
 “ quii vinculo solvit. Ejusmodi fulminis pontificii eâ tempestate
 “ tanta vis fuit, ut et apud plerosque omnes, (says Pufendorf, Introd.
 “ hist. of Europe, p. 423.) Imperatoria majestas evilesceret, et ipse
 “ Augustus in summas calamitates et æumnas conjiceretur. Indicto
 “ A. D. 1076, omnium pene principum conventu Treberæ, impe-
 “ rium Henrico abrogatur. Sententia tamen postea mitigata est, ut
 “ ad arbitrium pontificis tota causa referatur. Inter hæc Henricus
 “ paucis comitibus, adultâ jam hieme, in Italiam profectus, Canusii
 “ ad portam sub dio, vulgari et laneo habitu nudisque pedibus per-
 “ triduum substitit, veniam supplex a pontifice petens.” And even
 after this base submission, the pope did not cease to excite so great
 troubles and rebellions against him, that in the end this unhap-
 py prince lost his life. In like manner his successor Henry V,
 was so distressed by the pope about the affair of Investitures,
 that he was forced to give them up A. D. 1122. “ Quo facto et
 impera-

“ toria majestas vehementer est imminuta, et pontificia auctoritas
 “ et potentia mirifice aucta.” Pufend. introd. p. 423—425.

IN England king Edwy about A. D. 958, having incurred the ill will of the monks, who were then very popular in this nation, with Dunstan, then abbot of Glastenbury, and afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, at their head; these monks “ firent tous les
 “ efforts possibles pour decrier le conduite du jeune roy. Par les
 “ calomnies de tous cotez qu’ils, semerent contre lui, ils reussirent
 “ enfin à le faire passer dans l’esprit de leurs devots pour le plus
 “ impie des hommes. Ces calomnies repandus avec soin firent un si
 “ prompt effet, qu’on vit bientôt paroître dans la Mercie un grand
 “ nombre des mecontents, dont Edgar frere du roy se declara le
 “ chef et protecteur, &c.” Rabin, tom. i. The consequence was, that Edwy was outed of a great part of his dominions.

AFTER the Conquest, king Stephen was in great danger of the like fate. As he gained the kingdom, by the influence of the pope and clergy, to the exclusion of the empress Maud, who had the true right; so when he had once disobliged them in taking away their castles, he found how great and dangerous their influence was against him. In a synod they formally declared him to be deposed, and, if the empress Maud had managed politickly, that king could never have kept the throne.

THESE instances, to which many others might be added, shew plainly, that, at some times, religion or superstition may have so much power upon the minds of mankind, that the clergy, who can work upon them thereby, may, if suffered to keep their influence, and the power which their sacred character and revenues give them, be very dangerous to the civil government. They may, in many cases, even prevail against it.

AND this is true, not only of the clergy of the Romish communion with the pope at their head, but it may likewise be true in many cases of the Protestant clergy. You must see this, if you consider what happened in Scotland, in king James the First’s time, before he came to the crown of England[s], and the in-

[s] See Spotswood’s Church History of Scotland, and Heylin’s Hist. of the Presbyterians.

fluence which even of late Dr. Sacheverel had on the people of England, and if at the same time you attend to the scheme of ecclesiastical authority independent of the civil state, which some of them contend for, and in several cases have actually usurped, viz.

THAT the bishops only should elect, as well as ordain, all bishops and clergy, and alone have authority to judge and censure them in all matters, either of faith or practice, unless in capital crimes, and other great ones of a secular nature :

THAT the bishops should have the sole administration and disposal of all church revenues, not indeed to alienate them, but to distribute them as they think fit, and not to let them be alienated by the civil government :

THAT they should have an entire liberty to preach, and cause their clergy to preach, what doctrine they please to the people :

THAT they should have a right to censure all the laity, even by the excluding from communion, as long as they please, the members of parliament, peers, the royal family, and the king himself :

THAT they should have a right to hear secret confessions of all their sins, and to give them absolution :

THAT they should have a liberty to meet together in convocation as often as they think fit, and treat upon ecclesiastical matters, censure opinions, and the like :

THESE independent powers, in the hands of cunning and ambitious men, and in times when the people are inclined to superstition, might they not easily make the clergy, Protestant as well as others, too hard for a civil government ?

LESLEY indeed (Regale and Pontificate) proposes, that they should be under the obligation of oaths, not to use their influence against the civil government : That the principle of passive obedience to it should be propagated among them : And that the civil governors, though they should not have authority to deprive the bishops, yet should be at liberty to imprison, or put them to death, if they were found to act or design treason or sedition against the government. But first, how weak a security would oaths or principles be, when the clergy might be ill designing, and ambitious ?

How.

How little would it signify, that the civil government might imprison them, or put them to death? They might have good reason to be assured of their disaffection and seditious practices, and yet might not have evidence sufficient to convict them. If you say that they ought not to be deprived without sufficient evidence, and that where that is, they may be imprisoned or put to death, which will hinder their influence more effectually than depriving them; I answer, that may be true in some cases: But, in the mean time, the nation and the civil government may, and must, suffer, for want of bishops to exercise their functions; which, if these criminal ones be deprived instead of imprisoned, may be done by other fit persons appointed to succeed them in those posts for the public service.

UPON the whole, an authority to deprive the bishops and clergy, who are found to use their influence against the civil government, is the best, it is the only effectual, security which that government can have in general, and in all cases that may happen. Now our Saviour certainly designed, that civil governments, which are necessary to the welfare of mankind, should be secured in all cases: And therefore he could not design that his clergy should be so far independent of it, as the powers above specified would make them. He must allow, that the civil governors must have a right to limit and controul the exercise of the clergy's spiritual jurisdiction, when it may be otherwise exercised, so as it may do harm to the state. He must have vested the civil governors with a right, not only to judge of the conduct and design of the bishops and clergy, but even to deprive them of their secular emoluments, and to restrain the exercise of their sacred functions, when it is found that the civil government will really be endangered or suffer much by their continuing to exercise them. And their having a right to remove, or deprive, the bishops and clergy, when they are really disloyal and dangerous to the state, infers, that they must have a right to take cognizance and judge of their doctrine and conduct, in all cases [k]. For if they had not this right

[k] The necessity of providing for the safety of the civil government infers, that all princes have a right to deprive bishops and clergymen, who are found to be seditious,

right to judge in all cases, then, in some of the excepted cases, the welfare of the civil society might be endangered, which is not to be admitted.

HOWEVER, it does not follow from their right of judging, that they must have a right to act against the clergy in all cases; for the civil government may judge wrong, and, whenever they do so, they cannot have any right to act in pursuance of such judgments; if they do not so, they will be called to a severe account by God, for such a misuse of their power. And therefore they ought to be very cautious, both how they act, and how they judge. In all doubtful cases, in Christian countries, the civil governors ought to pay a due regard to the advice, and, I will even say, to the authority, of the clergy; for the clergy have some real authority in spiritual matters, which, as I have above observed, ought not to be lightly or disrespectfully opposed. But as the civil governors have a right to judge for themselves in all cases, so when they judge truly that the influence of the bishops and clergy is, or will be, used to the hurt of the civil government, they then have a right to oppose and restrain that influence by proper means, and in a sufficient degree.

To this it may be objected, that, as the civil governors will probably oftener err in their judgment than the clergy will, and so truth will be oftener hindered than promoted thereby, we therefore conceive that Christ cannot have vested the civil governors with this right of judging and censuring the clergy.

BUT to this I answer, that, even admitting this supposition, which is giving the utmost advantage to the objection, yet still it is justly presumable, that Christ hath vested the civil magistrates

ditions, and disaffected to the civil state, and in a condition to hurt it. But Christian princes, who have established this religion, have a farther right, in virtue of this establishment, to censure and deprive bishops, only for erroneous doctrine; even though these principles, or conduct, should not be hurtful to the civil state. For as they protect and maintain the bishops, &c. to teach their people true doctrine, so they have, in themselves, a right to judge which is true doctrine; and if the bishops, &c. will not teach that doctrine, then to deprive them of the benefits of the establishment.

with this right ; because their opposition to the truth cannot essentially hurt it. It may both subsist in all cases, and even thrive under discouragements from them ; whereas, on the other hand, if civil governors had not this right of judging and censuring their government, it could not subsist in some cases. But it is necessary that this should subsist and be secured in all cases : *Ergo*, the civil magistrate hath this right, &c.

Now, upon these grounds, we may fully vindicate the deprivation of the bishops, made in the first year of queen Elizabeth, and other proceedings in the Reformation, from whence our settlement ecclesiastical at this day is derived. That princess, at her accession to the throne, found the doctrines, forms of worship, &c. then publicly established to be very erroneous and superstitious. Almost all the bishops, who then were in the several sees, not only professed and practised according to these forms, but they resolved to adhere to them, and refused to take that oath acknowledging the Queen's supremacy, which, I have shewn, was just in itself, and therefore might justly be required of them. They had plainly an aversion to the Queen, on account of her being of a different religion ; and, for that reason, they refused to crown her. A majority of them being of this opinion, they would not, therefore, in an ecclesiastical way have deprived, or acted at all against, any of their own number : And if, with these dispositions, they had continued possessed of their sees, they must have been able to do a great deal of mischief to the civil government, both in keeping up error and superstition among the people, and in raising a disaffection in them towards the civil government, which might have proved very dangerous to its welfare. Therefore, the legislature had a full right to deprive them of their sees. We do not say that the civil government had a right to deprive them of their episcopal character ; as they received that from a spiritual authority ; and, during their lives, no civil power could take it away, and the less, because it was not necessary to the safety of the civil government, that they should do so. But of the power and right of exercising their episcopal authority in such a diocese, with temporal effects, and of all the secular emoluments, revenues, and dignities

dignities thereto belonging, the civil governors, for the sake of the public welfare, had a full right to deprive them.

UPON the voidance of their sees, the deans and chapters belonging to each of them, having a license from the Queen to choose new bishops for their respective churches, chose certain persons by her appointed in letters missive for that purpose. 'Tis true, they were not at liberty to do otherwise; because, if they had not complied with the royal nomination, they would have incurred a perpetual imprisonment, the forfeiture of their goods, &c. *i. e.* the penalties of a *premunire*. But their being under some constraint in this case was of no real disservice to the church; for, as long as the persons nominated by the Queen were, in all respects, fit for that sacred trust, and she had a right to nominate, it could be no harm that they were obliged to choose persons, who, by being approved by the Queen, might be the more able to serve the church and religion.

It had, indeed, been the usual practice in this nation, so long ago as the Saxon times, for the kings or their curia's to nominate to bishopricks, without any such form as election by the deans and chapters [1]. Collier, indeed, in his preface to his *Ecclesiastical History*, vol. i. p. v. affirms the contrary; and *ibid.* vol. i. p. 114, says, that Withred, king of Kent, in a council at Becanceld, A. D. 694, declares, "that the kings had no right to the appointment of bishops, but that it was to be made by their fellow bishops." But the authority of this council, though allowed by Dr. Atterbury, *Rights of Convoc.* and by bishop Stillingfleet's *Eccles. Cases*, vol. ii. p. 89, is opposed by Dr. Wake, in his *State of the Church*, p. 140; and is not indeed very clear, so that there cannot be much stress laid upon it. But as to the matter of fact, Ingulphus's testimony is unquestionable. And our common lawyers generally agree, (see Gibson's *Codex*, p. 122.) that bishopricks in

[1] See Stillingfleet's *Ecclesiastical Cases*, vol. ii. p. 91. Ingulphus, *History*, fol. 509. b. says, speaking of the times before the Roman conquest, that, "a multis retro annis nulla erat electio praelatorum mere libera et canonica; sed omnes dignitates, tam episcoporum quam abbatum, regis curia pro sua complacentia conferebat."

England [*m*], being at first all of the king's foundation, were donative; as they were likewise in France [*n*], Spain, and Germany, in those ages, which continued without any considerable opposition, till, the see of Rome having formed the project of its own excessive aggrandisement, by bringing all the clergy in Christendom to a more close dependance upon it, pope Gregory VII first opposed this practice with vigour; and his successors, after many struggles, at length, in great measure, carried their point in this, as well as in other kingdoms in Europe. Henry the First yielded up the point of Investitures, (see Spelman, in Wilkins' Laws, life of Henry I. p. 299, 304.) which grant was more solemnly confirmed by king John, in the great charter. Then, for a while, elections were made by the deans and chapters, which was the method the church of Rome insisted upon, without any express or peremptory nomination from the crown; but this method did not continue long. Our kings found it so expedient to the welfare of their civil government, that they should have some influence in the elections of bishops, that they seldom suffered any one to be chosen contrary to their liking; or, if any dean and chapter presumed to choose contrary to their liking, they frequently punished them for so doing. (See Prynne, on the fourth Instit. p. 321.) Afterwards, the king got the nomination, and the pope the approbation. (See Burnet's Hist. of Reformation, vol. i. p. 11.)

I AM sensible, indeed, that some persons, and those Protestants, are of opinion, that the practice of our kings and other monarchs in this case, is far from being any proof of right. It ought to be considered as an invasion upon the liberties of the church, which, in the primitive ages, vested the right of choosing bishops in the other comprovincial bishops, by a canon of the first council of Nice.

[*m*] See Selden, Not. ad Eadmer. p. 1608—1610, worth reading. Twissden, Hist. Vindic. of the Church of England, p. 52—64. *ibid.* 109. Coke upon Littleton, § 201, &c.

[*n*] De Marca, part ii. p. 296, 297. Vertot, Nominat. aux Evêchés de France.

THE objectors ought to shew, that there was either a divine unalterable appointment for this method, or that such a one is, in the nature of things, essential to the welfare of the church. But no divine or apostolical appointment, or at least none that was intended to be unalterable, can be shewn to have been made with regard to this matter. On the contrary, it appears, that the bishops were anciently chosen by the presbyters and people, as well as by the bishops of the province. Nor can this method of election by the comprovincial bishops, which the objectors would have take place, be essential, or constantly necessary, in the nature of things, to the welfare of the church. For it is plain, that the church hath long subsisted, and been in a flourishing condition, and been provided with very good bishops, upon the appointment of princes. Indeed, there is visibly a great expediency for this being done, in order to maintain that good correspondence between the civil government and the church, which is greatly subservient to the welfare of both.

AND this being the case, it signifies nothing to allege a canon of the council of Nice, (Can. 4.) Collier's Eccl. Hist. preface, vol. i. p. xiv. prescribing this method of election by comprovincial bishops. For that council had not, nor could any council have, as I observed before, a right to determine any such matter, in which the welfare of several foreign kingdoms might be concerned, so as to exclude all changes that might be found necessary to be made for the safety or advantage of those kingdoms.

And, indeed, the church of Rome has, in effect, acknowledged, that the method of election then settled was not unalterable; for she has actually changed this method herself, and established that of election by the several deans and chapters pursuant to the nomination of princes, which is to be ratified by the pope, as we have seen above.

TRACT VII.

The Claim of some English Protestants, to greater Liberty than they now enjoy.

AFTER having used my endeavours to justify our spiritual liberty from the objections of the Romanists against it, I should have put an end to the First part of these papers; but the particular state of our nation, and my earnest desire that you should be able to judge rightly of it, oblige me to add some further considerations. You are sensible, that numbers of our countrymen, who, I believe, are not wanting in affection to the civil part of the present establishment, profess to be dissatisfied with the measure of liberty, religious and civil, they now enjoy under it, and think themselves entitled to considerably more, from reasons of justice and of religion, as well as from considerations of national advantage; and, accordingly, some persons amongst them have, in several late books, been free in their complaints against those, who have not given way to the applications the dissenters have made for that increase of liberty to which they pretend; nor can we deny, but some things have been urged in defence of their cause, which deserve to be considered, not (as they have been hitherto) with the warmth and vehemence with which religious or civil disputes are generally attended; but with the freedom and sedateness of enquiry, which are requisite in order to the discovery of truth.

In this state of things, I cannot but think it desirable and necessary, that you, who are likely so soon to have a seat in the legislature, should be duly apprised whether their claims be well grounded or not, that (in a point which is, certainly, of great moment to the constitution of our country, and not a little difficult

ficult in itſelf) you may take the ſide, which you find to be right; to which end, I ſhall lay before you, with candor and benevolence, and, according to the beſt of my judgment, with truth, the things of the moſt weight, that have been alledged on each ſide of the queſtion; and I do this the rather, becauſe I ſhall endeavour to leave the common track of the controverſy, and put it, in ſome meaſure, on a new foot, by which it will be much ſhortened, and, I hope, rendered much more clear and eaſy to you.

BUT before we conſider what grounds thoſe Proteſtants, who ſeparate from the church of England, have for their complaints, it may be proper to acquaint you with the particulars of that ſpiritual liberty, which they actually do, or may, enjoy, as our laws ſtand at preſent.

By the firſt of William and Mary, ſuppoſing they perform the conditions of that act [o], they are excepted from all penalties laid upon them, by ſeveral preceding acts of parliament. And by 5 George I. chap. iv. the acts againſt occaſional conformity and ſchiſm were repealed. So that now they may,

FIRST, hold aſſemblies for divine worſhip, after their own way, at whatever times and places they think fit, after the place of their meeting ſhall have been certified to the biſhop of the dioceſe, or to the arch-deacon of that arch-deaconry, or to the juſtice of the peace, at the general or quarter ſeſſions, &c. and keep their doors open, without any fear of being diſquieted or diſturbed. They are not obliged to celebrate any of the days, which our church keeps holy, except only the Lord's-day.

SECONDLY, every particular congregation amongſt them may chooſe its own paſtors, without being obliged to apply to any other perſon to approve or lay hands upon them. And, as the general practice now is, thoſe miniſters are under no public reſtraint, but what the congregation lays upon them, as to what they ſhall teach. For though, indeed, by the Toleration Act, they are obliged to ſubſcribe the Thirty-nine articles, excepting

[o] The Toleration Act.

the 34th, 35th, 36th, and part of the 20th, in order to their being qualified for preaching, yet they are very seldom called upon to make, or do actually make, this subscription; in which forbearance, indeed, I am humbly of opinion, that our bishops and other governors act rightly, and agreeably to the genuine principles of toleration; from a sense of which, it is very probable, that the dissenting ministers will continue to have this liberty. In these two respects, the dissenters have more liberty than the members of the church of England.

THIRDLY, as the Schism act has been repealed, they may have schools and academies taught by persons of their own persuasion, for the education of their children in it according to their own principles; and they have actually, at present, considerable numbers of such schools and academies.

FOURTHLY, they may hold assemblies, when they think fit, not only for the public worship of God, but also to consult about their religious and civil interests, and have actually done so, on several occasions (which is more than the clergy of the church of England, in their public capacity, are allowed to do, without a writ of summons from the crown.) They did so in their attempts some years ago to get the Test act repealed.

FIFTHLY, they may excommunicate, or exercise any other acts of discipline against any of their members, and even over their ministers, without any appeal possible to be made against them to the crown, or any other jurisdiction, which, likewise, is more than the church of England can do.

SIXTHLY, they may safely write and publish whatever books they please, in a proper argumentative way, in defence of their own religion, or in opposition to the established church; which they have freely done, and, sometimes, even in an invective way. And,

SEVENTHLY, they may hold any civil office, if, at their entrance upon it, they only once take the oaths required, and the communion in the established church.

FROM this account it is visible, that our dissenting brethren have all the liberty that can be necessary, in a religious view, in order

order to their salvation. The chief questions to be considered, in regard to our safety, as well as theirs, are,

FIRST, whether the schism, that now unhappily subsists between the dissenters and the church of England, be justly chargeable on the former or on the latter?

SECONDLY, whether any alterations in our liturgy be necessary to be made, in order to gain the dissenters? And,

THIRDLY, whether the dispositions, occasioned by that schism in some of the dissenters, with regard to the establishment of the church of England, be, or be not, a sufficient reason for excluding the persons so disposed from a capacity of offices of trust and profit in the civil state?

WITH regard to the first of these questions, every one must be sensible, how very great a stress the gospel of Christ lays on charity and religious unity between his disciples. For there is nothing more clear, or more strongly urged, or more frequently repeated in the New Testament, than the union, charity, and affection, that ought constantly to be preserved amongst Christians. This unity and affection our Lord made a principal and essential mark of being his disciples; and in order to keep it up constantly amongst them, he commanded them to meet together for his worship and service, and therein to make frequent commemoration of his death, in the eucharist, which represents them as all members of one spiritual body, which is Christ, and, therefore, members one of another.

Now after this to divide, and (which is generally and naturally the consequence) meet in separate places for religious worship, in profest opposition to each other: This opposition and separation cannot, in the ordinary course of things, be made without producing contention, animosity, and ill will to each other; and must, certainly, both in its own nature, and as a breach of Christ's command, be a grievous sin in those, who are justly blameable on account of this discord and consequent separation. As to the fact of the separation of the dissenters from the church of England, it is well known to have been made on their

P p

part,

part; but in their own defence they alledge, that they were obliged in conscience to make it.

Now there may, indeed, in some cases, be a necessity for making such a one, viz. where any church, or body of Christians, will not admit others to communicate with them, unless they do somewhat that is really unlawful. In that case, the obligation to hold religious communion ceases; for we are not to do evil that good may come. We ought, in such a case, to abstain from the communion of such a corrupt and imposing church: And this I have shewn to be the case between us of the church of England, and the church of Rome. But is this the case between the Protestant dissenters, and the church of England? Does this church impose any necessary terms of her communion, which are really, and in themselves, unlawful? Perhaps you will see the contrary, if you will trouble yourself to peruse, with attention, even the following short observations on the dispute between us. I have not here meddled with their objections against ministerial conformity; because no dissenter can be obliged, either in law or conscience, to be a minister in our church. If then they do not like the terms of ministering in it, they are not compelled to it: They may communicate with it, as laymen; and in so doing, they will not be obliged to any thing, that can, with any colour, be reckoned sinful. I have, therefore, only considered their objections to lay-conformity.

Now to vindicate themselves in abstaining even from lay-conformity, some of them have vehemently objected to particular practices, required in our church, as being sinful, viz. to the use of sponsors, and of the cross, and the thanksgiving for the supposed regeneration of all persons, in baptism; to the manner of confirmation; to the improper translation of the psalms; to the reading apocryphal lessons in the service of the church, and the Athanasian creed; to some passages in the burial service; and to the obligation of kneeling at the sacrament of the eucharist.

BUT must not any one, who considers the nature and design of these things, see, there is no ground for this heavy charge? Is there any immorality in providing some other persons, besides parents,

rents, to take care of the pious education of infants? This is all our church means to do; and this must, ordinarily, or often, have good effects.

THE use of the cross in baptism is professedly designed for no other purpose, but to signify to the by-standers, by a visible sign and token, as well as by words, that the baptised child, as all other members of the church, is to embrace the service of Christ, notwithstanding all temporal hardships. And can there be any hurt in this? Kneeling in the Lord's-supper, is declared to be practised, not from any intention of adoring the sacramental bread and wine then bodily received, or any corporal presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood, but only to signify our humble sense of, and gratitude for, the immense benefits we have received by our Saviour's death on our behalf. Though, while he was on earth, he condescended to let his apostles sit or lye in a more familiar posture with him at his table; yet now that he is exalted to his glory in heaven, a more humble posture is properer for those, whose hearts are duly affected. The like remarks may be made about the use of the surplice, of a set liturgy, and several other things blamed by the dissenters.

THESE things are so clear, that the late Dr. Calamy, who was generally allowed to be one of the ablest men amongst the dissenters of his time, (though, indeed, he charges the practices abovementioned as sinful) yet, in other places, he expressly owns, that the things added by our church in divine service (meaning the things abovementioned) are not, in themselves, sinful to be complied with [p]; his meaning was, that they only become so in those by whom they are unwarrantably imposed [q].

Now this is putting the matter on quite a different foot, and goes upon a principle, which, indeed, the dissenters have always much insisted upon. This principle is, that "nothing is lawful
" to be practised in the worship of God, besides the necessary
" circumstances of it, unless it has been appointed by God him-

[p] See Doctor Calamy's *Life of Baxter*, p. 560, &c.

[q] *Defence of moderate Non-conformity*, p. 81, 82.

“ self, in the holy Scripture. He only knows what will be acceptable to him; and for men to add any other practices in his worship, more than what he himself has ordained, is that will-worship which is condemned in several places of the Scripture.”

Now with regard to this principle, we freely own, that “ nothing can be lawfully practised in the worship of God, as being, in itself, necessary to please and propitiate him, or to be a certain effectual mean of conveying his grace to us, but what he himself has plainly commanded; for men to add things to his worship, with this view and presumption, would be, indeed, *will-worship* [r], of which the Colossians of old were, and the Romanists of late are, guilty.” But nothing of this kind can be justly charged on the few ceremonial practices in the church of England. We do not practice them as being necessary to please or propitiate God, or as certainly effectual to convey his grace to us; we only look upon them as generally useful to make good impressions upon us, and dispose us the more to perform our duty as he has commanded it [s]. And this being only acting in pursuance of his commands, cannot ever be unlawful, when the ceremonies have, or are likely to have, this good effect; as, in the burial office, the ceremony of ashes to ashes, dust to dust. The use of dust and ashes was allowed by Calvin, as rending of clothes, striking the breast, and sacred musick; (our Saviour and the apostles *sung an hymn* [t]; *if any be merry, let him sing* [u] *psalms*;) women’s praying with their heads covered, men with their heads uncovered [w]. Circumstances of one kind or another external worship must always have; and some there may be, though not always necessary, yet,

[r] Col. ii. 23.

[s] The whole synagogue service was not of divine, but human, institution. See Potter’s Church Government, p. 308. Where see other things of this kind. See also Socrates’s Eccl. Hist. lib. xi. c. 22.

Baptism was added by the Jews as such a significant ceremony, previous to circumcision, without any divine authority; yet our Saviour himself submitted to it, and reckoned it a part of righteousness so to do, Matt. iii. 15. He did so to the feast of the dedication of the temple.

[t] Matt. xxvi. 30.

[u] James v. 13.

[w] 1 Cor. xi. 4, 5.

in several cases, useful to promote greatly the good ends of this worship.

Now the same reasons, that make it fit that the worship itself should be practised, must be of force to render those circumstances lawful and expedient to be added. However, it was not proper that these, or any other such circumstances, should be enjoined in the holy Scripture for perpetual use, because those usages, which, in one age and country, may be very conducive to promote piety, in another may tend to have a different effect; and, therefore, our Lord and his apostles did not think fit to enjoin in the Scripture any circumstances in his worship, as what were to be unchangeable: He left things of this kind to be ordained to edification, by the several governors of his church, in all ages: and in giving to them authority to act in these points, as should be fit, he also laid all private Christians under an obligation of obeying any such injunctions, that should really serve to promote true piety and edification. This was the import of those apostolical directions to *let all things be done decently, and in order; let all things be done to edifying* [x], &c. It is plainly to be supposed, that all things relating to religious worship were not settled in the Scripture: And if the governors of the church act agreeably to these general directions in any additional ceremonies, which they enjoin to be practised, (provided they be not in too great numbers, so as to be inconvenient in divine worship) these injunctions of theirs are certainly lawful, and ought to be obeyed by all private Christians.

SOME persons have entertained a notion, that whatever is neither commanded nor forbidden in the holy Scripture, as to the worship of God, is a part of Christian liberty, upon which the governors of church or state ought not to intrench by their commands or prohibitions [y]. And that, if at any time they do so in any instances, though in themselves lawful to be obeyed, yet

[x] 1 Cor. xiv. 40. 26.

[y] See, about not offending Christians by unnecessary impositions, Locke's Letter on Toleration, Dr. Clarke's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 38.

private Christians ought not to obey them, for fear of giving countenance to this usurped authority, and encouraging, by their submission to these commands, the imposition of many more of the like nature, that may prove of disservice to religion, as well as burthensome to them. But this notion of the extent of Christian liberty in these points, is very wrong; for God, in order to the preservation and promoting a right practice of religion, intended, as I have said, that, besides the practices which he ordains in Scripture, all other fit means or helps towards them should be ordained, from time to time, by the governors of his church [z]. And therefore, when such are ordained, it is no part of Christian liberty to refuse to submit to them. God requires such submission and obedience as a reasonable and necessary condition of Christian communion; and disobedience is a blameable and perverse breach of unity and order in the church, which God will not fail to punish.

BUT, perhaps, you may think, as others have done, that even admitting church governors have sufficient authority to enjoin ceremonial practices that are fit to be enjoined, and private Christians ought to submit to them; yet, where the advantage of continuing them is not very great, and where numbers of Christians are, though unduly, yet so far actually offended at them, as that, without hurting their consciences, they cannot comply with them; it cannot but be right, and the duty of governors in such cases, to lay aside these ceremonial practices, or leave them indifferent: For does not Christian charity, and a regard to the weakness of our brethren, require this conduct? Are there not several precepts and instances in the Scripture to that purpose? viz. in the fourteenth chapter to the Romans, ver. 1, 2, 3, &c. [a]: And accordingly, ought not the ceremonial practices, which are contested and charged as sinful by the dissenters, to be laid aside, in order to open a way for their coming into our communion? Might

[z] See Mason's Sermon, p. 10. on this point of liberty.

[a] See what bishop Taylor says, *Liberty of Prophecyng*, p. 353, 354. about the duty of particular churches in allowing communion.

not the use of the cross in baptism, and the use of sponsors, might not kneeling in the communion, be left indifferent? Might not the Apocryphal lessons be laid aside, and some passages in the liturgy and burial office be altered, &c.? These things have been several times proposed, even by eminent persons in the communion of the church of England; and, therefore, cannot be supposed likely to hurt our church, whilst they might gratify and gain even many amongst the dissenters. Must not Christian charity and condescension to our brethren, even supposing them weak and in the wrong, require, that we should lay aside these things? To this I answer, that we ought, undoubtedly, to take any measures conducive to conciliate the good will of our dissenting brethren, and to bring them over into our church; provided,

FIRST, that these measures will be likely to gain over any considerable numbers of them, without being offensive to others, for whom we ought to have equal, if not greater, concern; and that withall they will be, in no respect, detrimental to the welfare of our public establishment in church and state. All these circumstances are of importance, and ought to be considered and examined with care, before any thing can be rightly determined of this kind: And the first enquiry proper to be made is, whether these concessions would be sufficient and effectual to satisfy any considerable number of our dissenting brethren, so far as to bring them over to our communion; for, unless they will be likely to do this, it will not be worth while to make so great an alteration.

Now the right way to judge about this question must be, to recollect what the avowed demands and the conduct of the dissenters have generally been, ever since their separation was formed, about the middle of queen Elizabeth's reign, and as they continued, and are at present [b].

Now

[b] The Puritans in queen Elizabeth's time, after speaking of the offices of lord bishop, suffragan, dean, arch-deacons, says, "all which offices, as they are strange and unheard of in Christ's church, nay plainly in God's word forbidden; so are they utterly, with all speed, out of the same to be removed." Bishop Maddox's Vindication, p. 112.

Now though, at first, they insisted chiefly on some alterations in the ministring habits and the public liturgy, yet they soon afterwards carried their demands to a much higher pitch: They charged the whole frame of the episcopal hierarchy, as being corrupted and unlawful to be continued. Bourn, p. 31. says, "It is a tremendous insult on the authority of the son of God, our Lord and judge, so directly to counteract his orders, by subjecting some ministers to the will of others;" he means by the oath of canonical obedience, p. 34. 40. Mr. Pierce's Vindication, p. 119. says, "that the Puritans looked upon maintaining such a corrupt church government, to be a grievous sin, and highly offensive to God; and insisted on its being abolished [c]." They contested several parts of the royal supremacy [d]; especially the nomination of bishops and pastors. These last they declared belonged of right indefeasible [e] to the choice of the several congregations to whom they were to minister [f]: They were for restoring abbey lands [g]: They refused to use the established liturgy, and insisted that they ought to have the liberty of free extempore praying in public, as they should see occasion. And have not these same notions and demands been ever since insisted upon, by the generality, at least by great numbers, of the dissenters? Are they not so to this day [h]? And can it, therefore, be probable, that they will

The Puritans would not tolerate others, *ibid.* p. 120, 121, 122, 124. The Independents in the Savoy conference, 1661, do not allow that ordination to the work of ministry, though it be by persons rightly ordained, does convey any office-power without a previous election of the church. Neal's Purit. vol. iv. p. 191.

"But, is not the Christian world in a sad condition, if a bishop cannot be chosen without a royal mandate? &c." Neal's Purit. vol. iv. p. 37. See what he says on the absurdity of an uninterrupted succession.

The author of the Foundations of Religious Liberty, in 1755, p. 24, 25. seems to declare against all civil establishments in religion, and, particularly, the establishment of the church of England, p. 29.

[c] Calamy's Life of Baxter, p. 548. "The people were not to be won to the love of prelacy." The dissenters, says Calamy, Life of Baxter, p. 163, 164. charge eight things as flatly sinful in the English liturgy.

[d] See Maddox, p. 220, 223, 224. and The late dissent fully justified.

[e] Bourn, p. 86.

[f] See Maddox's Vindic. p. 218, &c.

[g] Maddox, p. 233—242.

[h] See Bourn, both his pieces, and the dissenting gentleman's Answer to Mr. White.

be satisfied so as to come over to our church, unless they be gratified as to these points? Of this every intelligent person, who knows the world, must judge for himself. In particular, how little disposed they would be to bear episcopacy, such as it is here, we may see by the vehement opposition they make to a lower state of it in the American colonies, and their connexions with the Presbyterians in Scotland.

THE next question then is, whether these great points, as well as the smaller before mentioned, ought to be given up, in order to bring over the dissenters? Perhaps some persons in this age may think that the liturgy, episcopal government, the royal supremacy, &c. might well enough be parted with for the sake of peace. But they who know the dispositions of the generality of the nation will not imagine, that this will be the common way of thinking; it would probably be entertained by very few: To be sure, it would not be the judgment of those, who, for their numbers, learning, and even for quality, are very considerable, and regard episcopal government as of apostolical institution, and intended, by the inspired authors of it, to be, as far as conveniently might be, perpetual in the church. It is probable, they would sooner make a schism of greater numbers than the present, and more dangerous to the state, than comply with such measures; and even the more moderate kind of churchmen would be against these concessions, as being first likely to occasion incurable disturbances in our church, and the rise of innumerable sects, and also to give very great advantages to popery against us, when we should be an unconnected, disunited heap of various little societies, in opposition to her so well united, and of so much, and so increasing, power in Europe. And, even on a civil account, these moderate men would be against these large concessions, because they know such concessions would too much weaken the crown, by ruining its supremacy in ecclesiasticals, (which is of exceedingly great moment towards supporting the royal authority) and hurt the nobility and gentry by taking away their patronage, and they would at the same time increase and heighten a democratical spirit^[i]; all which would

[i] See Maddox vindicated, p. 210, &c.

tend to raise a disaffection among the generality of the people, that would be highly dangerous to the establishment in the present family. In short, these concessions would tend to destroy, by degrees, the whole ballance of the constitution; and, therefore, we must conclude, that no real friend of it would be for them.

Now, if these great concessions, which are the only ones that will be likely to satisfy, and bring over, any numbers of the dissenters, are not to be made; the remaining question is, whether any lesser ones are proper to be made in these times? As to which point, there are, probably, in the church of England, persons of different opinions.

SOME persons think, that even these moderate concessions, whilst they would not have any good effects on considerable numbers of dissenters, would be likely to disgust and offend many of our own communion: Because they will apprehend, that greater ones are designed to be made, as soon as there shall be a favourable conjuncture for them; for, indeed, upon this principle, that, "we ought not to retain the practice of any things indifferent in themselves, that will cause any Christians to keep out of our communion," it follows, that we ought to lay aside, not only the surplice, but the other habits of the bishops and clergy, their ecclesiastical courts, the time of communion, the use of organs, the people's responses in our service, the festivals of saints, and even those of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, the Lent fast, &c. As, therefore, the dissenters will be likely to consider the things, at present to be altered, as being given up, either in acknowledgment of the truth of their general principle, or in compliance with their importunity; they will be likely to be more stiff in keeping out, and, at the same time, more importunate in their demands, to be let into our communion upon their own terms. And as numbers, who now are not of their party, yet, observing how they gain upon the church by degrees, will think they are likely to carry their point in the end, they will become more disposed to favour and adhere to them. The right way, therefore, in the judgment of those persons whose opinions I am representing, will be to adhere to the present constitution of our church,

church, which is, in all its parts, strictly lawful and defensible. This course, which will have the reputation of a rational and laudable constancy, will be, at the same time, out of the reach of any just censure. It will check and discourage the spirit of innovation and unsettlement, which wise men have always disliked, and which, at present, so much abounds; and will be, in the end, most likely to bring over the greatest numbers of the dissenters to us, when they find that, even in these times, from which they had the greatest hopes, they will not be likely to gain any points, by mere importunity or interest, against reason.

OTHERS in the church of England (who are more influenced by the fear of offending any Christian brethren, though weak, and by a charitable desire of gaining them) think it would be right for the church to go as far in her concessions to the dissenters as she reasonably and safely can, even though it may not be likely that many dissenters will, at present, be influenced by them; because that conduct will shew a charitable and truly Christian disposition in the church, which will, undoubtedly, be a just reputation to her, and may be likely both to soften the dissenters at present by this indication of her real benevolence towards them, and gain more upon them hereafter, as their prejudices wear off; or, if not, yet the church will not have done herself any harm; since she will not have parted with any things that are, really, necessary, or now even so much as serviceable, to her: And she will have shewn her good and reasonable disposition before God, who will be likely to bless and prosper her the more, and men, in general, to esteem and reverence her for it.

Now, without all doubt, if this condescending course was most likely to please God, it ought to be taken; but God will, certainly, be pleased with that, which is likely to have most good effects upon the whole. It cannot, justly, be conceived to be his will, that, in compliance with the groundless scruples of weak brethren, any course should be taken, that will tend to produce animosities in others, or civil commotions, and all the other terrible ill effects that are likely to follow upon them. It can only be supposeable, that it will be most agreeable to him those measures should

be taken, which are most likely to be conducive to the quiet and welfare of the whole.

Now one cannot make a true judgment of that matter, without knowing well what the real dispositions of the generality of the people of our own church, as well as of the dissenters, are; especially, whether, if any such concessions should be proposed, either in convocation or in parliament, they would not breed great heats and differences; and whether they would not be pushed farther than they ought to go. These questions must be left to the wisdom and judgment of those who are well acquainted with the characters of the chief clergy and laity, who have parts in the legislature, and with the general dispositions of the people in this kingdom. But however this point of making concessions may be determined; it will, I conceive, be, in the first place, right, inviolably to preserve, and to perfect, the toleration, if any thing be wanting in it: And, secondly, to treat the dissenters with all Christian charity and brotherly kindness, and amicable applications, to soften the spirits of our people towards them: But, at the same time, it will be necessary to prevent violent dissenters from being able to subvert or hurt our ecclesiastical constitution. I do not contend, that this must always be done by the Sacramental Test; for, though I think this method not unlawful, yet I do acknowledge it to be attended with some ill consequences, and had rather some other method could be found for that purpose: But it ought to be fully equivalent to this test, to keep out the violent dissenters from posts of power and profit: For, if this test were to be taken away, and such dissenters were to work themselves into many posts of power, influence, and profit, as they soon would do, by being chosen to represent corporate towns, they would, in that case, be as able, as they would certainly be willing, to undermine and subvert, or, at least, much hurt, the constitution of the church of England and establishment, and, by consequence, the national welfare: And though, perhaps, they might not succeed for a time, yet there would, at least, be great animosities, discords, and perhaps disturbances and commotions, occasioned by the

TRACT VII. *And the Claim of the Dissenters to the Increase of it.* 301
the contentions of these opposite parties, for and against the church.

THESE ill effects can only be prevented (mankind being disposed as they are and will be) by keeping the violent dissenters out of civil places, and thereby hindering the increase of their power and influence, and their hopes of ever attacking the ecclesiastical constitution with success; which constitution, whatever some may think, could not be destroyed, without the utmost danger of destruction to the civil establishment also.

THIS exclusive method, therefore, ought, in prudence and due regard to the public peace and welfare, to be taken: And if it be truly for the public welfare, it must certainly be just, as well as expedient; for the civil capacities and rights, and emoluments of all members of a society or nation, ought to be submitted to, and limited by, the consideration of the public welfare.

The End of the **FIRST PART.**

E R R A T A.

Page	Line		
19	29	<i>for the the</i>	<i>dele the</i>
26	32	this truth	<i>read this faith.</i>
37	33		<i>dele testimonial</i>
39	31	led think	<i>read led to think</i>
54	Note 5	Augustin	August
67	22	hatt	that
72	28	hath taken	had taken
79	7	innocent.	innocent, <i>with a Comma.</i>
81	13	Vth Tract,	VIIth Tract,
92	penult.	worships	worship
120	12	fame	some
133	19	allowed	hallowed
135	12	word	world
163	16	be	by
189	20	keeping up	heaping up
191	21	and	as
ibid.	ult.	Du Moul.	Du Perron,
193	15	former—latter	latter—former
194	9	never	ever
203	Note 6 and 9	Leodicean	Laodicean
209	21	safety	safest
228	28		<i>read at first. with a full Stop.</i>
270	6	not only given	<i>dele only</i>
281	8	do not so	<i>read do so</i>

